

THE BIRDS OF KENYA AND UGANDA.

VOL. II. PART 5.

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CHARADRIIDAE. Continued.

Genus *ARENARIA*.

ARENARIA INTERPRES INTERPRES, Linn. TURNSTONE.

Ref. : Linnaeus, Syst. Nat., 1758.

Type locality : Gothland.

DISTRIBUTION :

A winter migrant to the coast of Kenya, from northern Europe and Siberia.

DESCRIPTION : (Plate 4.)

Adult, winter : Forehead, lores, crown to nape ashy-brown, paler on the forehead, centres of feathers black; a blackish patch at the anterior angle of the eye; cheeks whitish with buffy tinge; a blackish streak at angle of mouth; earcoverts ashy-brown streaked with blackish; chin and throat white. Mantle and scapulars black-brown, with ashy-brown to buffy edges, often worn to whitish; scapulars with tawny outer edges. Back and rump white, with a blackish V at the upper part of the upper tail-coverts, remainder white. Tail, sepia black on exposed area, with white bases and white tips, the dark area in the form of a bar which is reduced in width from mid-outward so that the outermost feather is almost entirely white. Wing-coverts : lesser ones blackish brown, paler at edges; median coverts sepia black with paler edges and dark centres; primary coverts black-brown with inner ones tipped white; greater coverts black-brown with wide white tips and whitish on inner webs.

Primaries brownish-black with narrow white edging, white shafts, and white on the inner webs, the white extending on to the outer webs in the case of the inner primaries; secondaries sepia-brown with white bases and white tips, the inner ones almost or entirely white, long innermost feathers sepia with pale edges and dark central streak. Breast with two large sepia to black-brown patches with a whitish patch toward centre, the dark colour crossing the upper breast but leaving an inverted V area of white which continues down over the lower breast, abdomen and sides.

Bill black at end and sepia at base; legs and toes ochreous to tawny. Eyes brown.

Males and females very similar in colour in winter dress. Toward the end of their stay, the adults assume breeding dress, but the complete summer plumage is not completed before departure. The change in plumage takes place in January to March, and is almost complete, the primaries and most of the secondaries being retained.

An adult male is figured. The forehead and lores are white, the white extending over the eye and contiguous with a white patch over the ear-coverts; a narrow black streak crosses the forehead from eye to eye; there is a black patch below the eye which reaches the black gula streak. The crown is sepia with dark centres. The black gape streak extends back as a nape band, setting off the white bar on the lower neck; chin and throat white, followed by a black breast patch, the two patches meeting across the upper breast and forming a white triangle, the white of which extended to the whole of the underside. The mantle is glossy green-black and reddish-russet, many of the feathers pale-tipped but these tips wear off rapidly; scapulars of the same colour as also the long innermost secondaries; the lesser and median coverts are blackish with russet-red edges and tips. The adult female is somewhat like the male, but the light areas of the head are tinged with buffy and the dark areas are more brownish; the russet of the mantle and scapulars and long inner secondaries is not so reddish; the wing-coverts only slightly tinged with russet. Wings 138-148 mm.

The bill is black; legs and toes dark orange; eyes brown.

As the birds do not breed here, we need not deal with the eggs or young in down.

Immature, first winter : These resemble the adult in winter plumage i. many respects, but the general tone of plumage is duller black-brown, and the pale tips and edges to the mantle, scapulars, coverts and tail are sandy to buffy. The breast patch is more sepia and mottled white, the dark tips hardly obscuring the white bases to the feathers.

HABITS :

As already stated, these birds are visitors from Northern Europe and Asia, arriving in large flocks in September and being very numerous in October. They remain along the coast up to the end of March or beginning of April. The Turnstone has been reported from Lake Victoria, but more evidence is required. It is essentially a bird of the maritime littoral, and the estuaries of the larger rivers, such as the Tana and Juba.

They are always in flocks, varying from half a dozen to hundreds. When feeding they are restless in their movements, darting hither and

thither after crustacea. They usually feed along the tide line. The food consists of crustacea and small mollusca, larvae of various kinds, very small fish-fry, and a certain amount of seaweed. In flight they are conspicuous; the actual flight is rather slow and hesitating; the white wing-band is noticeable. They have not been observed by me to indulge in any flight formations and manoeuvres, such as one sees in the case of certain Plover. They appear loath to take flight and if disturbed they seldom fly far, pitching on some broken stony patch or pebble strewn reach, where on landing, they blend entirely into the terrain and are lost to view. Their plumage is highly cryptic. One most often flushes a small bunch, previously unnoticed, and on pitching, they stand in a huddled position, remaining almost motionless. When flushed they utter a sharp note two or three times, "tche tchit."

Genus *HAEMATOPUS*.

HAEMATOPUS OSTRALÉGUS, Linn.

EUROPEAN
OYSTERCATCHER.

Ref.: Linnaeus, Syst. Nat., 1758.

Type locality: Oeland, Baltic.

DISTRIBUTION:

Along the coast of Kenya and occasionally on the inland waters of Lakes Victoria and Naivasha, once on Lake Magadi; and observed on Lake Rudolf.

DESCRIPTION: (Plate 5)

The birds which one most often observes are adults in winter plumage which they have assumed before arrival on our shores, or they are young in the first winter dress. I therefore propose to describe the adults in winter, thereafter indicating the spring change.

Adult, winter: The whole of the head (with the exception of a small patch below the eye, which is white) to the nape, chin, and upper throat, mantle, scapulars and long inner secondaries, lesser and median wing-coverts, black with a slight greenish gloss.

Across the throat, a white band, sometimes extended on to the side of the neck, sometimes on to the chin; lower neck black; back and rump white, as also upper tail-coverts, the latter with slight black tips; tail black distally, basally white; breast and the remainder of the lower surface white. Primaries black with variable amount of white on the inner webs and from the third primary variable white patches on the outer web; outer secondaries white basally with increasing amount of sepia-black on the ends from within outward, inner secondaries white; greater coverts white. Under wing-coverts and axillaries white.

Legs and toes pinkish; bill orange-red with horn-brown tip; eyes vermillion. Wings 245-256 mm.

Spring plumage: A partial moult takes place toward the end of January and continues to March. The chief alteration is the complete elimination of the white throat band, and the darker more glossy greenish of the mantle; the increase in colour of the soft parts.

Sub-adult, first winter: Very like the adults, but tone of black much browner; median coverts with buffy tips much worn; upper tail-coverts barred black; some buffy tips to feathers of the mantle, legs and toes dirty pinkish; bill only slightly orange at the base, rest horn brown; eyes brown.

As the birds do not breed here we will not deal with the nesting habits or eggs.

HABITS:

The Oystercatcher arrives toward the end of September and beginning of October; and migrates north in the first week of April. Though never very numerous, small flocks of twenty or so may be seen in open formation along the coast. They follow the line of the tide when feeding, or frequent the shallow lagoons on the coral reefs. They certainly prefer the more sheltered reaches of the shore line and when not feeding they rest on the low exposed sandy islets. They also show a preference for the sandy and pebbly shore rather than the mud flats of the numerous creeks. They are most active when the tide is receding.

The food consists of crustacea, and mollusca, worms and larvae.

The robust build, pied plumage and orange bills make this bird a conspicuous object on the shore.

Specimens recorded from inland waters have been single or in twos; probably stragglers down the Nile system.

HAEMATOPUS MOQUINI Bp. BLACK OYSTERCATCHER.

This species is recorded as observed on the east coast but its position as a regular visitant is obscure.

RECURVIROSTRIDAE.

Genus *RECURVIROSTRA*.

RECURVIROSTRA AVOSETTA, Linn.

AVOCET.

Ref.: Linnaeus Syst. Nat., 1758.

Type locality: Oeland.

DISTRIBUTION: (Plate 6)

Europe and Asia to Mongolia, and parts of Africa. Migrating to Africa in the winter. Many birds locally resident and recorded on

Lakes Rudolf, Nakuru, Naivasha, and Magadi. Has also been recorded from Lake Victoria.

DESCRIPTION :

Male and female adult : Greater part of plumage snowy-white; top of head from base of bill, and round the eye and down the back of the neck black. A small white patch above and below the eye white; lower part of neck, white; mantle mostly white, with lateral feathers black; inner and long scapulars also black, longest ones white; outer white ones forming a continuous white line with the longest ones; back, rump, upper tail-coverts and tail pure white, the last with slight grey tips to the central feathers. Outer primaries black with white bases, inner ones mostly white; secondaries white except the long inner ones which are shaded sepia to black; margin of wing and bastard wing white; bend of wing white; lesser coverts brown-black to black as also median and some greater coverts, forming a continuous black bar with the innermost secondaries. Bill long and very slender, black, and up-curved; legs and toes grey-blue, eyes red-brown. Wings 220-235 mm.

Sub-adults : Very similar to above but black much tinged with brownish and sepia; crown and forehead mottled with black-brown and whitish; upper tail-coverts with some brownish cross-bars toward tips; coverts black-brown and sepia and tipped with buff. Primaries brownish. Legs dirty bluish-grey. Eyes brown.

Nestling : Jackson recorded the finding of a nestling on the shores of Lake Nakuru. As I have no specimen, I quote from Witherby, *Handbook of British Birds*, p. 650. "Down on forehead cream-white; narrow irregular black-brown line from base of upper mandible to hind-crown; rest of crown pale greyish-buff, irregularly mottled and dotted with tufts of black-brown; nape pale greyish-buff, down with sooty-brown bases; from nape to mantle two irregular parallel sooty-black lines; two irregular black patches on rump; an irregular black-brown line along ulna, another from base of uropygial tuft toward wing; uropygial tuft black intermixed with light buff; rest of upper parts pale greyish-buff intermixed with light buff and sooty-brown; from base of upper mandible through eye, a narrow black-brown line; rest of underparts cream-white intermixed with dusky-brown round tibia."

HABITS :

In Eastern Africa, this species is resident on the lakes Nakuru and Naivasha; and doubtless on others, though I have no personal records of specimens from other lakes during the months April to August.

They are joined during the winter months by migrants from the north so that dates of arrival and departure are thus difficult to ascertain. I have examined birds which are in moult on the wings, along

the primaries, in June and July; others again, shot in May, have many of the wing feathers worn and faded by the action of the soda in the lake.

These birds frequent the more open flats with scattered clumps of reeds and rushes rather than the reed-beds, but during the rains when the grass-lands at the lake side are under water, they feed there. They prefer the shallows over the mud flats and here they walk about with bills just below the surface, rapidly sifting the silt for larvae and other aquatic insects. Worms and small mollusca and crustacea are also taken. Never very numerous, these birds are conspicuous and easily recognised by their striking plumage. They are usually seen in pairs or small bunches of half a dozen, not in flocks. When disturbed they get up with a clear whistling call like "kluwit" oft repeated; their blue legs hanging pendent if the flight is short, and held out behind if sustained.

They undoubtedly nest on the mud flats, but I have not taken the eggs. They are described as sharply pointed at one end, dirty-buffy in ground colour and blotched with dark-brown to black. Two eggs are reported, occasionally three.

Genus *HIMANTOPUS*.

HIMANTOPUS HIMANTOPUS, Linn.

BLACK-WINGED
STILT

Ref.: Linnaeus, Syst Nat., 1758.

Type locality: Southern Europe.

DISTRIBUTION: (Plate 7)

On all the larger inland waters of Kenya and Uganda, the majority as winter migrants, though numbers are local residents.

DESCRIPTION:

Male adult: Forehead, fore part of crown, lores, cheeks, and a spot under the eyes, chin, throat, fore-neck, and the whole of the undersurface of the body white; hind-part of crown, nape, ear-coverts, and hind neck to mantle white tinged with pale grey, or ashy-grey slightly darker on the head. Mantle and scapulars black with a strong green sheen; wing-coverts, secondaries, and primaries similarly coloured, and slightly more brownish on the inner webs of the latter two. Back and rump pure white; tail ashy-grey to pale grey, the outer ones white; long upper tail-coverts pale grey. Bill black; legs and feet pinkish-red; eyes crimson, or red-brown.

Female adult: Somewhat like the male but top of head and hind neck more ashy, wings less glossed with green; mantle and scapulars

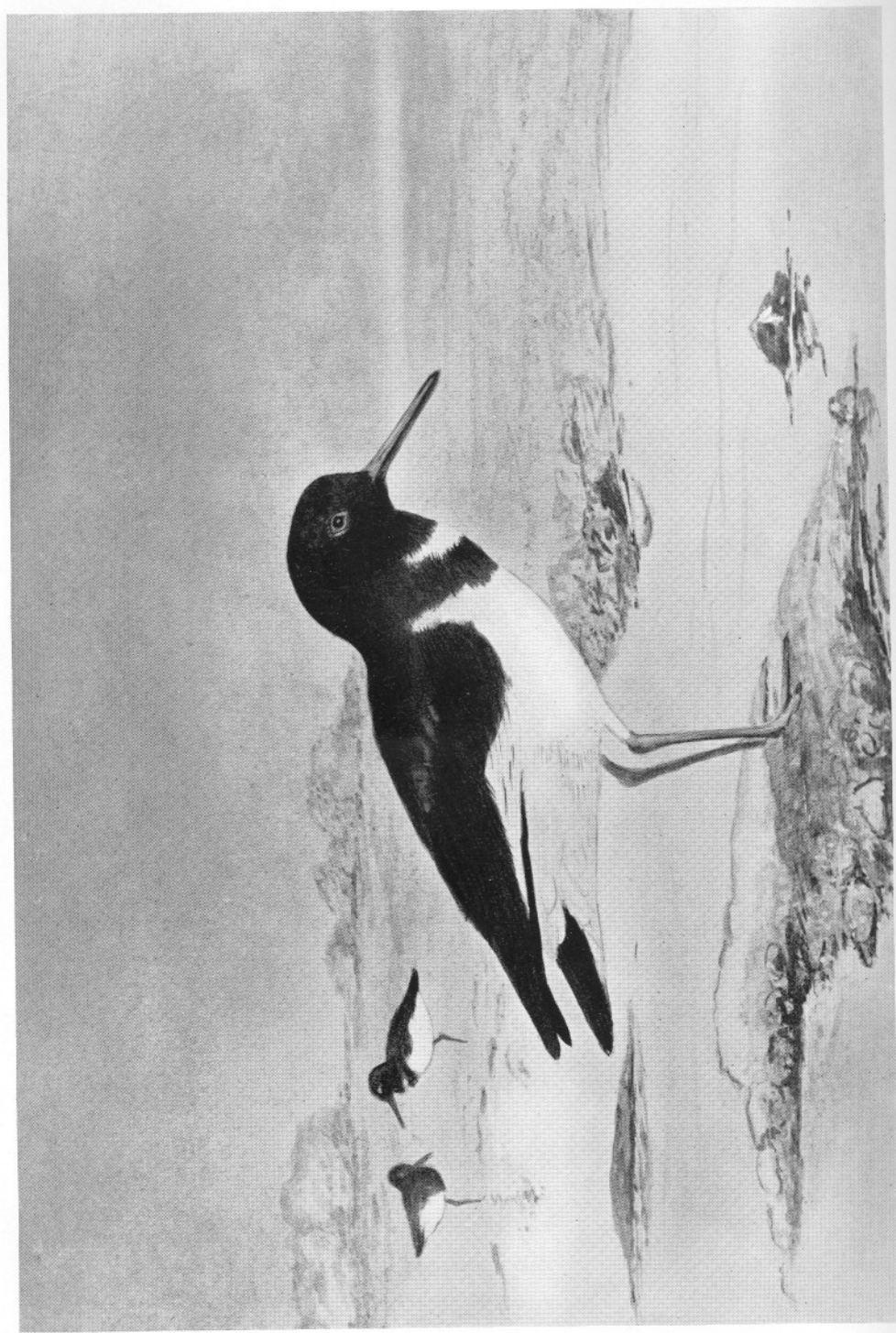


Summer.

TURNSTONE. (*Arenaria interpres interpres*, Linn.)

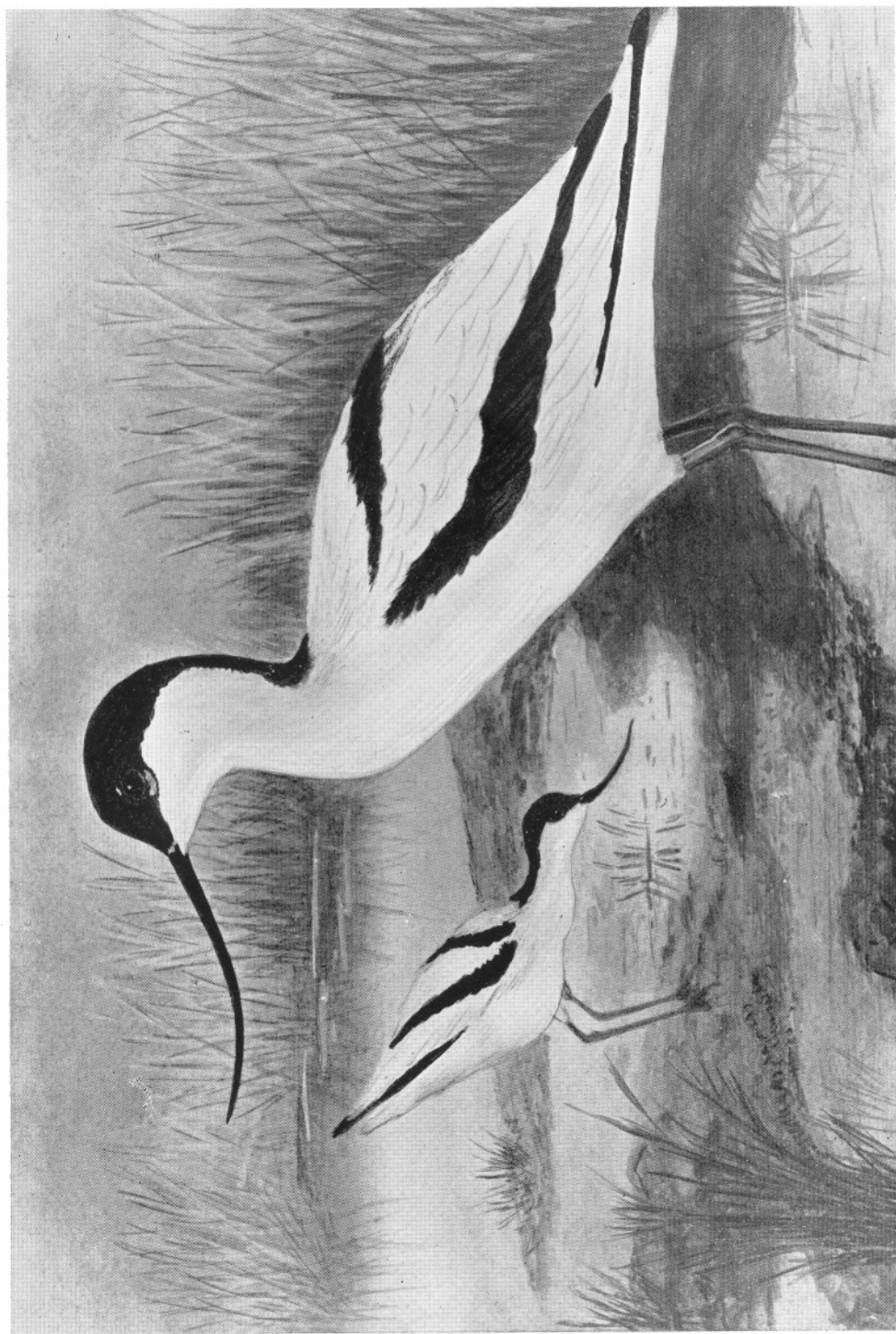
Winter.

van Someren.



EUROPEAN OYSTERCATCHER. (*Haematopus ostralegus*, Linn.)

van Someren.



AVOCETS. (*Recurvirostra avosetta*, Linn.)

van Someren.

PLATE 7.



BLACK-WINGED STILTS. (*Himantopus himantopus*, Linn.)

van Someren.

and long inner secondaries ashy-grey-brown, the mantle feathers somewhat pale tipped.

Adults in winter plumage differ somewhat from summer birds in the colouration of the nape and neck the tone being a more uniform ashy grey, the males losing the blackish tips to the feathers of the crown.

Immature: General scheme of colour pattern as adults; crown, nape, and hind neck ashy-brown to sepia; mantle and scapulars ashy-sepia with pale tips to the feathers; wings black with wide sepia tips; under-wing coverts sepia with buff tips; primaries and secondaries blackish brown, the inner primaries and secondaries with white tips and inner margins to inner webs; upper tail-coverts with sepia end bar; legs and feet dull flesh-brown; eyes brown; bill black at tip, brown at base.

Nestling: The downy plumage has not been seen by me and I take the liberty of quoting Witherby: "Down on fore-head light buff; from base of upper mandible to hinder crown a black-brown median line; . . . rest of crown light buff, with irregular lines and small dots and tufts of black-brown; nape light buff, down with sooty-brown bases; rest of upper-parts, sides of neck, and sides of body light buff with irregular and indefinite and variable black-brown markings, sometimes tending to form two irregular bands down mantle and back; an irregular band from uropygial tuft along sides of lower back, down around tibia intermixed with sooty-brown; uropygial tuft black-brown, down with buff tips; from base of upper mandible through eye a black-brown line; eye-stripe light buff; remaining under-part white."

HABITS:

The Black-winged Stilt frequents practically all open expanses of water where there are mud or sandy banks along the fore-shore. They have been known to take up temporary residence on dams and artificial lakes, and even to take advantage of temporary water and swamps formed during the heavy rains.

They are never very numerous, and do not appear to associate in flocks; one sees two or three birds here and there or possibly half a dozen. There is no doubt that the local birds are resident and breed, for year after year one has noted them during all months and by their behaviour they have been nesting. My collectors reported young on Lake Koroli in July. Adult males with enlarged breeding organs have been taken in May.

The species has been noted in greatest numbers on Lake Rudolġ (south end) on Lakes Nakuru and Naivasha, Elmenteita, Olbolosat, Lake Koroli, and Marsabit; temporary swamps in the Southern Masai

Reserve, Nairobi swamp, on dams in the Lumbwa-Sotik area, and on the lakes in Uganda.

They feed in the shallows as they walk leisurely along, disturbing the bottom by lateral movements of the feet, but the food is picked off the surface of the water. It consists of various insects, dragon-fly larvae, larvae of water-beetles, fly larvae and small mollusca and crustacea. In captivity, I have fed them on very small worms and tadpoles.

They are not quick flyers and their flight is not sustained; they soon alight. In flight their long red legs are conspicuous and appear as red streamers behind them. They dislike deep water, much preferring the shallow bays which are free from reeds and snags. If, however, they are compelled to take to deep water with bottom beyond the reach of their feet, they can swim remarkably well.

Family DROMADIDAE.

Genus *DROMAS*.

DROMAS ARDEOLA, Payk.

CRAB-PLOVER

Ref. : Paykull, K. Vet.-Handl., 1806.

Type locality : Coast of India.

DISTRIBUTION :

The coastal line of Eastern Africa.

DESCRIPTION : (Plate 8)

Male adult : The whole of the plumage pure white except for the following areas : a jet black patch commencing at the base of the hind neck expands over the mantle and scapulars, forming a " saddle " ; the tips and outer webs of the primaries black, shading to ashy and white on the inner webs ; the greater coverts similarly coloured ; the rectrices slightly tinged with ashy-grey.

Female adult : Very similar to the male but the black does not extend so far on the long scapulars.

Both sexes have black bills, horny at the very tip ; legs and toes blue-grey ; eyes brown ; length of wing 205-220 mm.

Juvenile : Differs from the adult as follows : the top and hinder part of the crown is streaked with black ; the mantle area is only slightly tinged with black on an ashy-grey ground, which colour extends over the whole of the wing except the primaries, secondaries and greater coverts which are dull blackish on the outer webs and whitish to ashy on the inner webs. The tail is also more ashy-grey.

Nestling : We have not taken the bird in this stage, but it is described as covered in an ashy-grey down slightly mottled on the dorsum.

HABITS :

The Crab-plover is a common species along the coast, especially so from the mouth of the Juba River to south of Mombasa. It occurs in small parties or large flocks and is a conspicuous bird; the brilliant black and white plumage shows up strongly. They are by no means shy and with care can be approached to within quite short distances. There should be no difficulty in recognising the species, for their blue-grey legs, strong stout bills, and general build set them apart from any other waders along the shore. In general behaviour they resemble Stone-Plovers; they have the same habit of standing almost upright with the head drawn in between the shoulders, and they run along the shore for some distance before taking wing, if approached too closely. They appear to be equally at home either on the exposed reefs when the tide is out, or on the sandy reaches at high tide. They, however, seek most of their food among the weeds on the reefs, or among the debris at high water line. The food consists of crustacea and small mollusca, marine worms, and often small fish from the shallows.

The nesting habits are peculiar, for this species nests in burrows where one or two eggs are laid. They are large for the size of the bird, pure white with a matt surface. 43 x 52 mm. No nesting burrows have been recorded along the Kenya coast.

Family ROSTRATULIDAE, Lowe.

Genus *ROSTRATULA*.

ROSTRATULA BENGHALENSIS, Linn.

PAINTED SNIPE.

Ref. : Vieillot, Analyse, 1816.

Type locality : Asia (India).

DESCRIPTION : (Not figured)

In suitable localities throughout Kenya, from the coast belt to altitudes of 10,000 feet, and in Uganda.

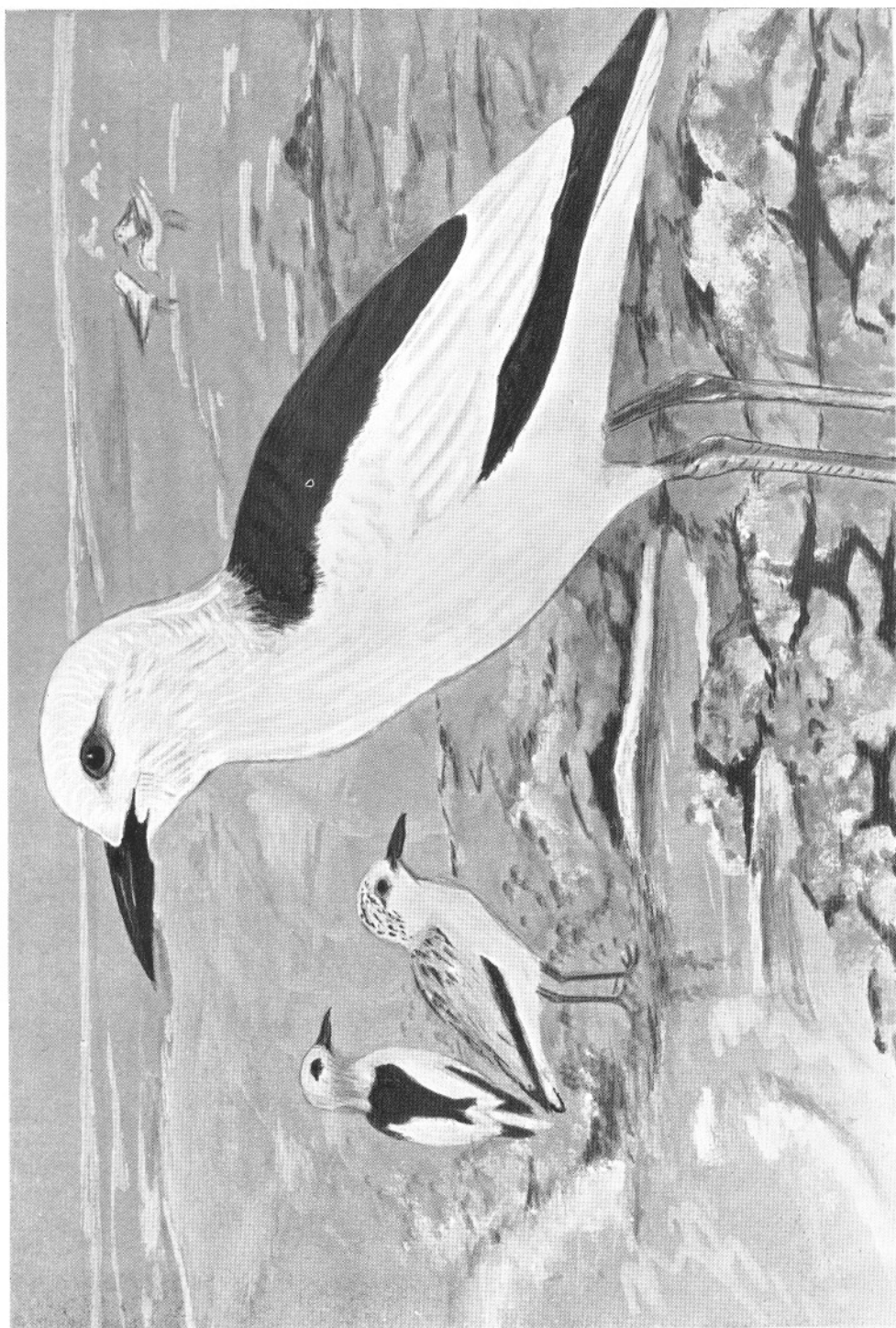
DESCRIPTION :

Male adult : Top of crown grey-brown with a central buff stripe running from base of bill to nape, feathers on either side of this white tipped; a buff ring round the eye and extended back toward, but not reaching the nape; ear-coverts grey-brown slightly white streaked; cheeks and throat whitish with very small blackish streaks; lower throat and sides of neck more boldly streaked blackish and white;

upper breast and lower hind neck and upper part of mantle ashy-grey-brown with fine blackish wavy barring broadest on the breast and many of the feathers with white tips; lower breast white, the white extending up on either side just in front of the wings and just behind this a few strongly barred black and buffy white feathers; underside of body to vent and under tail-coverts white, the last slightly buffy; mantle and scapulars olive-grey, with strongly marked golden buffy line on outer webs contrasting with deep olive-black shaft line and inner webs which have one or more pure white cross bars; short scapular feathers with broad olive-black bases, followed by a white bar outlined in black, and ends olive-grey, edged white. Back and middle of rump grey with blackish bars and white tips; lateral rump white; upper tail-coverts grey with black cross lined two series curved to enclose lateral greenish-buffy circular spots, tips white; tail feathers grey with narrow black cross lines each feather with three golden-buffy oblong spots on either web outlined with black, tips buffy-ochreous.

Wings : Primaries grey in ground colour with wavy broken narrow black barring, with two black patches on the outer webs and a series of somewhat circular golden-ochreous spots outlined in black extending the width of the outer webs; inner webs with white tooth marks. Secondaries grey in ground colour, with narrow black cross bars, ochreous spots on the outer webs and buffy to white streaks on the inner webs; the long inner secondaries washed with olive and finely vermiculated with black toward the ends which are crossed by olive-black bars accentuated with white and by ochreous bars; greater and median coverts greyish at base and distally olive-ochreous with two or more golden-ochreous cross bars accentuated with black; lesser coverts greyish washed with olive distally and with some ochreous spotting. Under wing-coverts and axillaries white. Wings 125-130 mm. Bill 45 mm, slightly enlarged and down-curved at the tip; pale brown slightly darker at the tip, and more yellow at base of lower mandible. Legs and toes olive-grey. Eyes brown.

Female : Top of crown olive-brown with purply tinge, some black barring and whitish tips; centre of crown with ochreous stripe edged with black and rusty colour at base of bill; a conspicuous white ring round the eye, the white extending back over the ear-coverts, the whole accentuated by a border of black; rest of head and neck chestnut, paling on the throat and chin; darkening toward the upper breast where it shades into a broad black chest band accentuated by a white bar which passes up toward the bend of the wing and behind these "horns" a blackish-olive patch shot with purply; the rest of the underside pure white. Mantle olive-grey with slight purply sheen, the lateral feathers with longitudinal ochreous streaks on the outer webs accentuated internally by jet black, the rest finely vermiculated with black. Scapulars like the mantle but with incomplete black cross



Immature.

CRAB-POLOVER. (*Dromas ardeola*, Payk.)

Adult.

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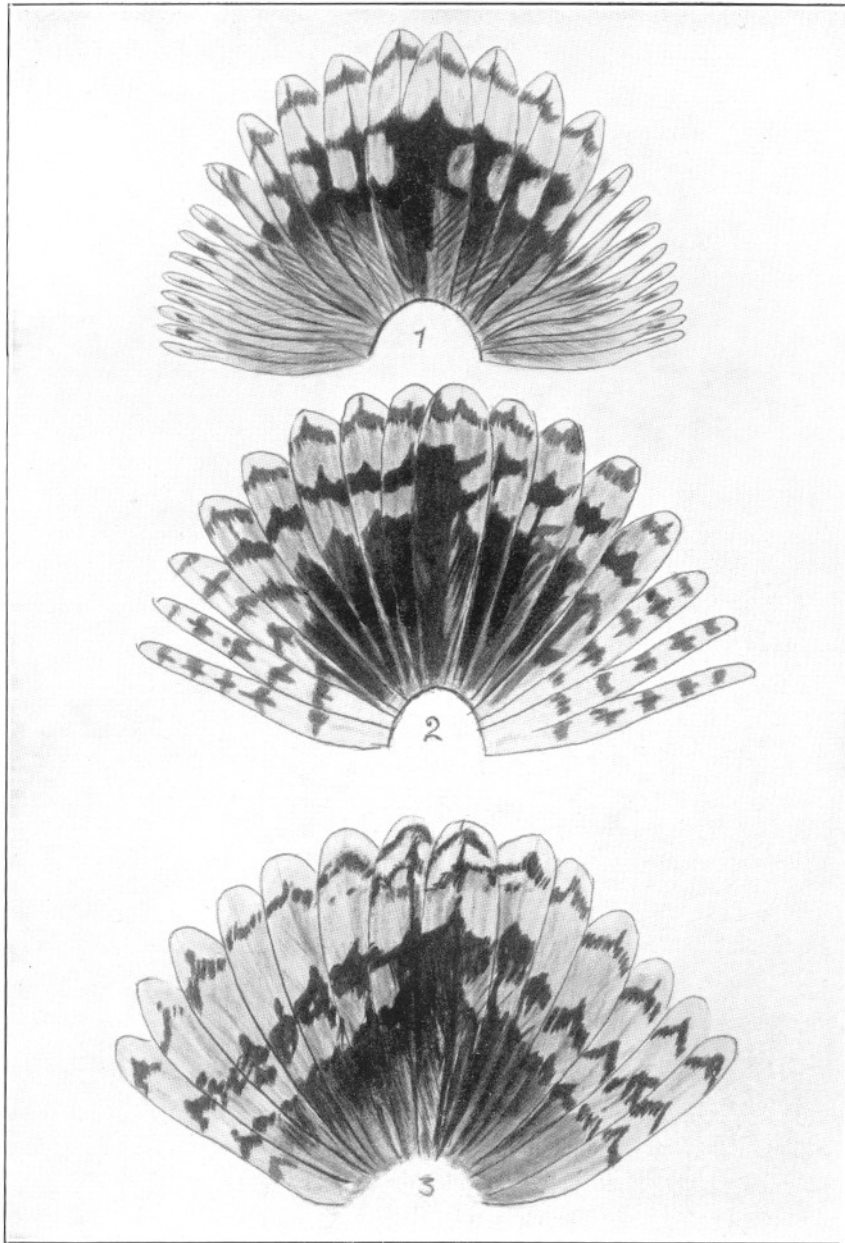
PLATE 9.



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EUROPEAN COMMON SNIPE. (*Capella gallinago gallinago*, Linn.)

PLATE 9a.

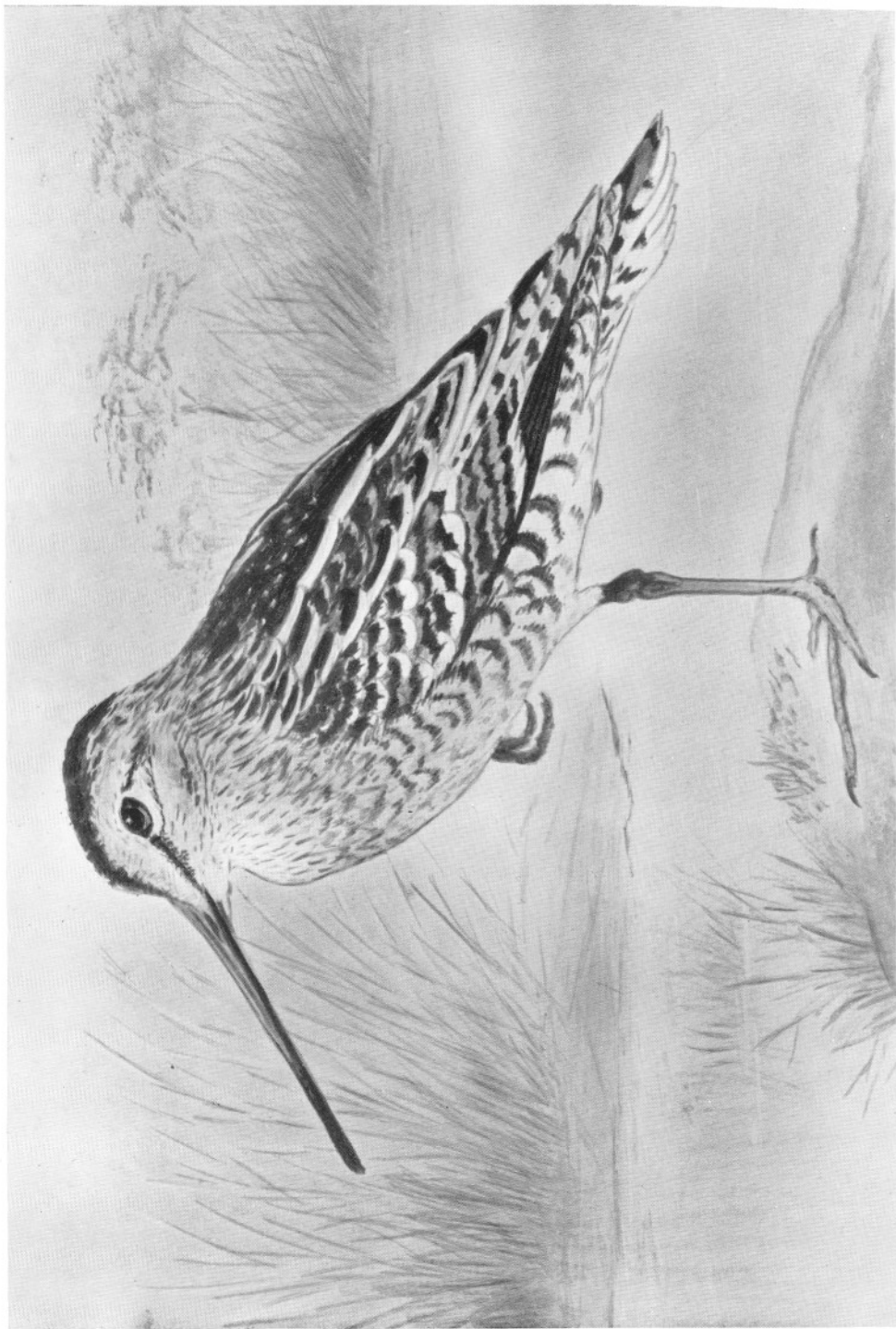


Diagrammatic sketches of Tails of Snipe.

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1. Indian Pin-Tail.
2. African Snipe.
3. European Snipe.

PLATE 10.



SOLITARY, DOUBLE or GREAT SNIPE. (*Capella media*, Lath.)

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barring set widely apart, the long feathers olive washed and white tipped; from the basal scapulars are three pure white, narrow, long plume feathers which, when displayed curve down over the coverts. Wings: Primaries and secondaries very much as in the male but more blackish on the outer webs of the former; the long inner secondaries are, however, greyish with a strong greenish wash, finely crossed-barred in black and with two to five more pronounced black cross bars. Greater coverts black basally, olive distally, with narrow black cross bars; median and lesser coverts olive, with bronzy sheen and fine black cross barring. Back, rump, and upper tail coverts as in the male, but tail feathers more greyish in ground colour, with less conspicuous ochreous bars which are narrower but usually extending right across.

Immature: Even in this stage the sexes are differentiated, but there is a predominance of the male colouration. The dorsal ochreous lines are not so marked while the white tips to the scapulars and long inner secondaries are tinged with buffy and the marks on the wing coverts are not so olive. The brown neck and breast of the female is gradually assumed but is mixed with olive-grey, and the black chest band is flecked with grey and white.

Nestling: The chick in down is ochreous-grey with a chestnut brown line on the crown and side of the head; the back has a central line of chestnut bordered by black, and on the sides from the scapulars a darker brown line; the wings with two black bars; under side buffy.

HABITS:

The Painted Snipe is essentially a bird of swamp and swampy margins of streams and rivers and lakes. Not only are they to be found in reed-beds but also in the midst of thick papyrus amongst which are open pieces of water. One may frequently put up one or more birds from a papyrus bed with the aid of a dog, but one can seldom recover a shot bird if it falls amongst tall papyrus. When flushed in reed-beds the birds get up with a clumsy flight, rather flopping, and make an easy target. One cannot say that they give one a sporting shot; quite the reverse.

They have a very wide distribution, being found from the coast right up to the highlands up to 10,000 feet, and in suitable localities throughout Uganda. They are undoubtedly local migrants, but the governing factor seems to be food supply dependent on the state of the water level of the swamps. They feed entirely on larvae, worms, and small mollusca, with some grass-seeds. They are by no means clean feeders, for one of the chief places in which to find these birds is just where the Municipal sewerage system empties into a river (Nairobi area). One sees them here in twos or small family parties, not in flocks or whisks, and for the most part they are sluggish unless suddenly flushed.

In spite of their distinctive plumage they nevertheless are cryptic and quite difficult to spot, even though one has noted exactly where a bird has pitched. On landing, they seldom run or hide, but stand stationary amongst the reeds and may thus escape observation.

The African bird was at one time considered distinct from the Indian species but is now generally accepted to be identical, but I am personally doubtful about this. If they are identical, the distribution would be from South Africa, through Eastern Africa to India, Ceylon, and Malaya. Our birds are resident and breed throughout their range.

The nest is a shallow depression at the edge of a swamp, not far removed from water, and usually sheltered by an adjacent clump of reeds or herbage. Two eggs are usually laid, occasionally three. The ground colour is ochreous to ochreous-grey, with bold black-brown blotches, lines and spots, averaging 25 x 32 mm.

On the two occasions on which I have found the nests, the male bird has been flushed from it. It is recorded that the female, and more brightly coloured of the two sexes, does not take part in incubating the eggs. Of this I have no personal knowledge, nor can I vouch for the statement that it is the female which does the courting, but such is said to be the case.

From observation, it would appear that a pair will occupy a given territory and remain there if undisturbed, their number not being added to except during the breeding season when the young are hatched, but when these are strong on the wing they are driven off. I have had one particular small swamp under observation for years and have never found more than one adult pair in occupation. On one occasion when the pair were shot the swamp remained untenanted for a month and then another pair took possession.

The male birds flushed from the nest were close sitters and only left the nest when approached to within a foot. One nest had eggs about to hatch, and the parent remained close by and flopped about as though wounded.

With the advance of settlement and drainage of swamps in the Nairobi area, these birds are not so plentiful as formerly.

Family SCOLOPACIDAE.

Genus *CAPELLA*.

CAPELLA GALLINAGO GALLINAGO, Linn.

COMMON
EUROPEAN SNIPE.

Ref. : Linnaeus, Syst. Nat., 1758.

Type locality : Sweden.

DISTRIBUTION : (Plate 9)

Kenya and Uganda. A migratory species from Europe.

DESCRIPTION :

Male and female, adult : Head pink-buff with two lines of black-brown running from the base of the bill to the nape; a further dark streak from the bill, through the lores and eyes; eyelids white; cheeks slightly streaked with brown, the dark streaks pronounced on the ear-coverts; nape band pink-buff; chin and throat white to pink-buff; back of neck blackish-brown, each feather with lateral notches of cinnamon-buff; fore-neck and upper breast sandy buff with obscured brown streaks and inverted V marks; lower breast, belly to vent white, the flanks with wide irregular brown barring; under-tail-coverts buffy to white with irregular brownish bars; mantle and inner scapulars dark blackish-brown with slight greenish gloss, each feather notched and tipped with tawny-buff; the long scapulars with pronounced borders of pinkish-buff on the outer webs; back and rump blackish-brown with green tinge and white tipped; upper tail-coverts pink-buff with brown-black, irregular bars and whitish tips; tail: centre pair basally dark blackish shading to bright cinnamon with white tip and subterminal blackish bar; from next pair to outermost shading from pinkish-buff to white, with black-brown barring and freckling, bases brownish. Primaries dark brown, paler on the inner webs, first primary very small, second with outer web white or buffy, next only narrowly white; secondaries brown-black, with broad white tips and some whitish mottling on the inner webs, long inner ones with barring and mottling of buff on the outer webs; greater coverts black-brown with white tips, and paler on the inner webs which are irregularly barred and freckled with buffy; median coverts black-brown with olive tinge, tipped white or buff and some freckling; lesser coverts rather darker, especially toward upper margin; margin of wing black-brown with white tips; under wing-coverts and axillaries black and white barred.

Legs and toes olive greenish to yellowish; bill dark-brown with olive base; eyes brown to hazel. Wings 125-138 mm.

Tail fan-shaped; 12-16 feathers, *outermost feathers broad*, about 8-10 mm. Length of bill: males 60-70, females 64-73 mm. (Plate 9a.)

Immature: Somewhat like adults but cinnamon-buff on dorsum not so marked; wings more brownish and edges to the feathers and tips wider and usually much worn.

HABITS :

As the species is non-breeding we need not deal with the juvenile or nestling stages. Migrants from the north have been noted to arrive in Uganda and Kenya during the last week of September, but the majority pass in October; some few remain in suitable spots if not harried. The northward move takes place in April, but some late arrivals have been noted in mid-May. Their departure is no doubt influenced by the rains.

The species cannot be called a common migrant, large whisps are unusual; small ones of a dozen are usual. Cf. Solitary Snipe.

They are to be found on most of the lakes, swamps, rivers, and streams and inundated lands, during some period of their migration north or south, but as many of the swamps dry up toward the end of the year, they prove unattractive and the birds move south. They are partial to the marshy edges of the waters where the vegetation is not too thick or long, and are especially fond of places where cattle have been driven to water and the place well trodden and polluted. They dislike deep water.

When aware of danger, they "freeze," standing motionless with heads drawn in to the "shoulders," or they adopt a semi-crouching position. When flushed, they get up and flight in a zigzag way, not very high from the ground, and drop. One can put them up two or three times before they flight high and drop at a distance. They take much of their food by "feel," as they pierce the soft mud with their bills; such food consists of larvae (beetle and dipterous), and worms; other food such as small fresh-water snails and insects are obtained on the surface. They feed mostly at dawn and in the evening.

They are practically silent, but if suddenly flushed will utter a harsh note like "skeep."

CAPELLA MEDIA, Latham. SOLITARY or GREAT SNIPE.

Ref. : Latham, Gen. Synop. Bds. Suppl., 1787.

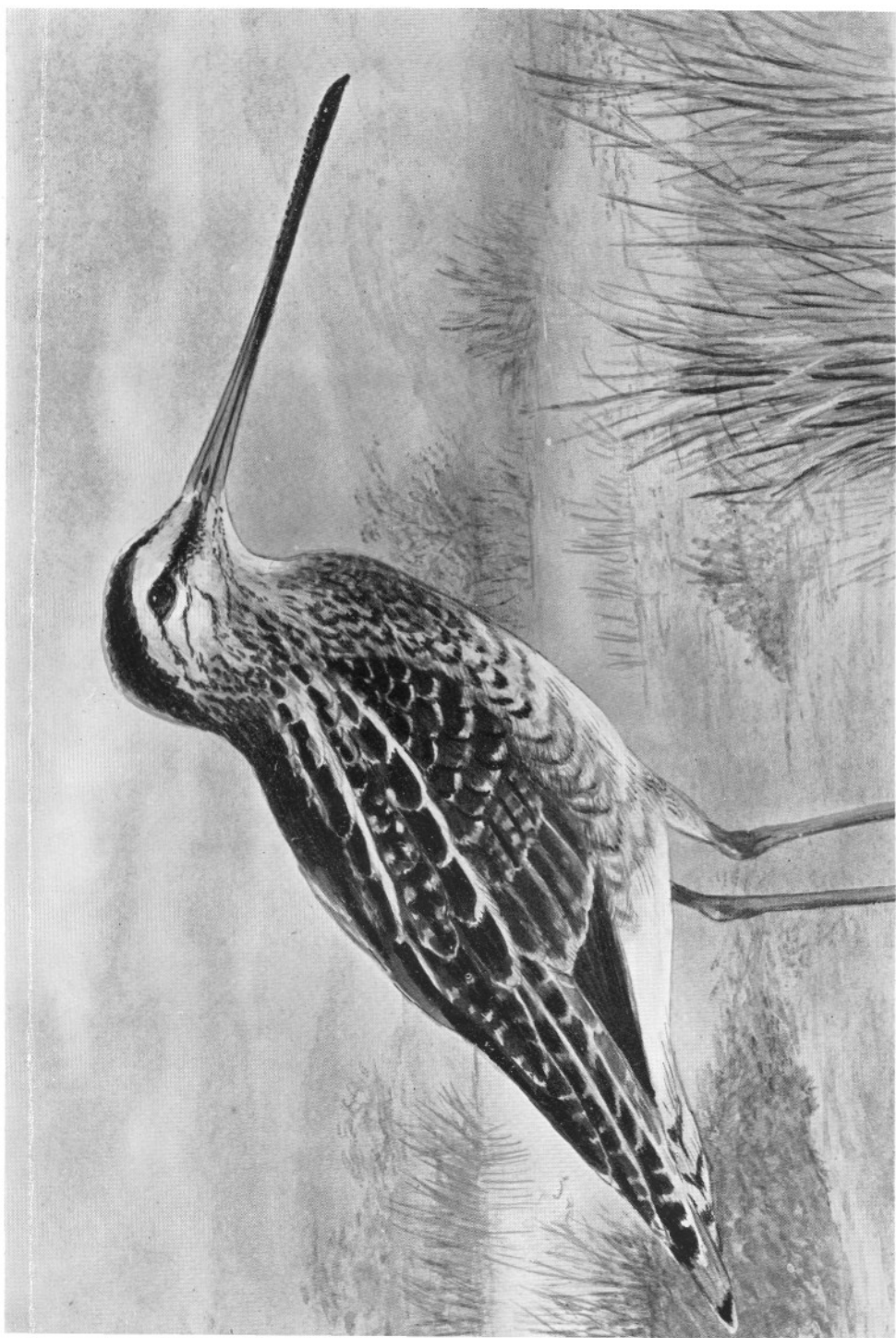
Type locality : England.

DISTRIBUTION :

A migrant from Europe and Western Asia, migrating to Uganda and Kenya where it is found in suitable localities near water.

DESCRIPTION : (Plate 10)

Male and female adult. Head very similar to that of *C. gallinago*, but bill much shorter. Top of head with a central buffy streak from base of bill to nape; on either side of this, a broad brownish-black streak slightly spotted at margins and reaching to occiput; side of head from lores, cheeks, supercillium, and ear-coverts, buffy to ochreous finely streaked with blackish; a blackish streak through lores to eye; eyelids white or pale buff, and continued back toward nape; chin and throat white; fore, side and hind neck ochreous-buff, the feathers with dark centres giving these areas a streaked appearance; upper breast and sides ochreous-buff with dark cross bars slightly angled, very pronounced on the sides and flanks; lower breast and abdomen whitish; thighs white with blackish bars; under tail-coverts buffy with black central streak and cross bar on outer web enclosing ochreous-buff spots strongly marked.



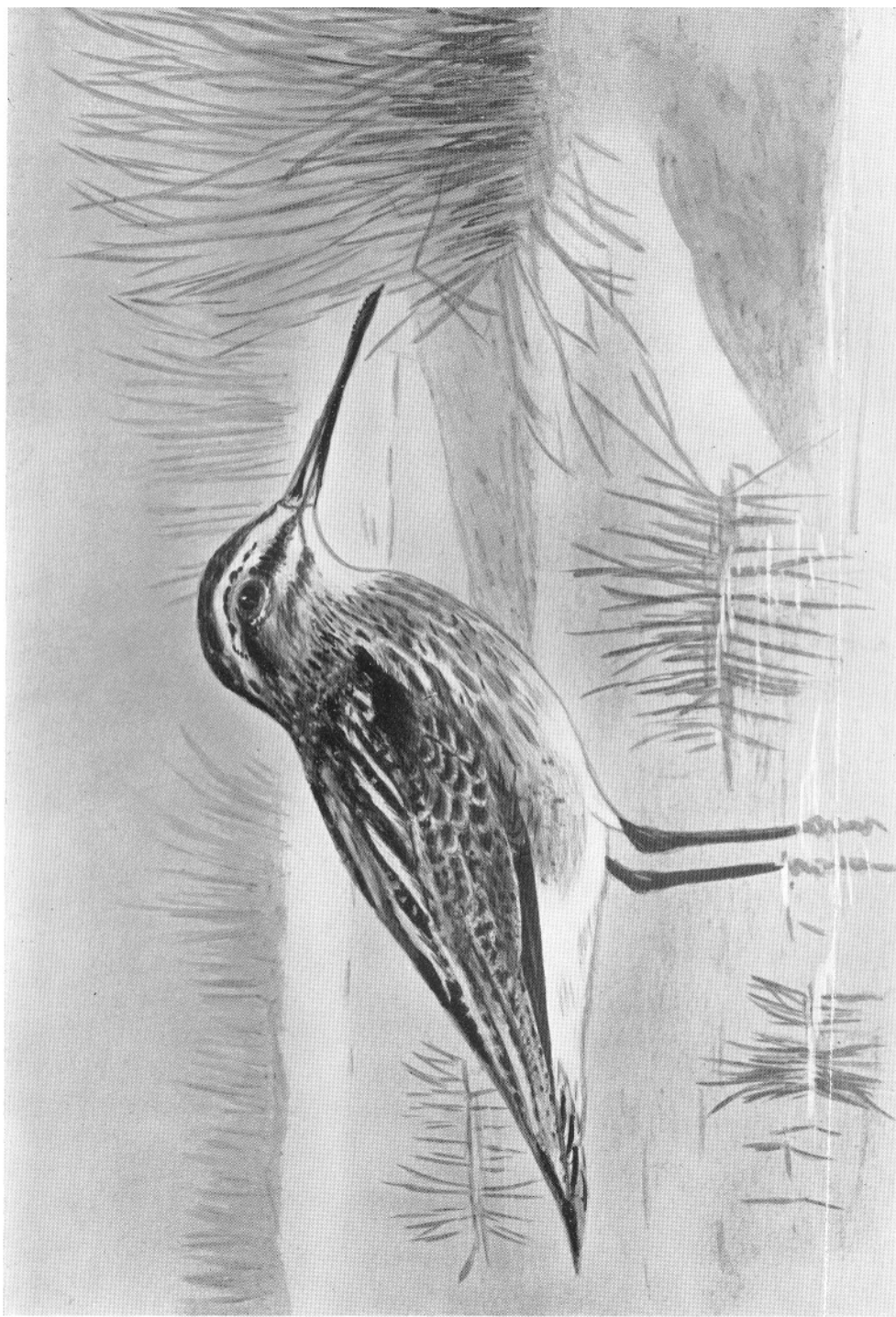
AFRICAN SNIPE. (*Capella nigripennis*, Bp.)

van Someren.



INDIAN PIN-TAILED SNIPE. (*Capella stenura*, Bp.)

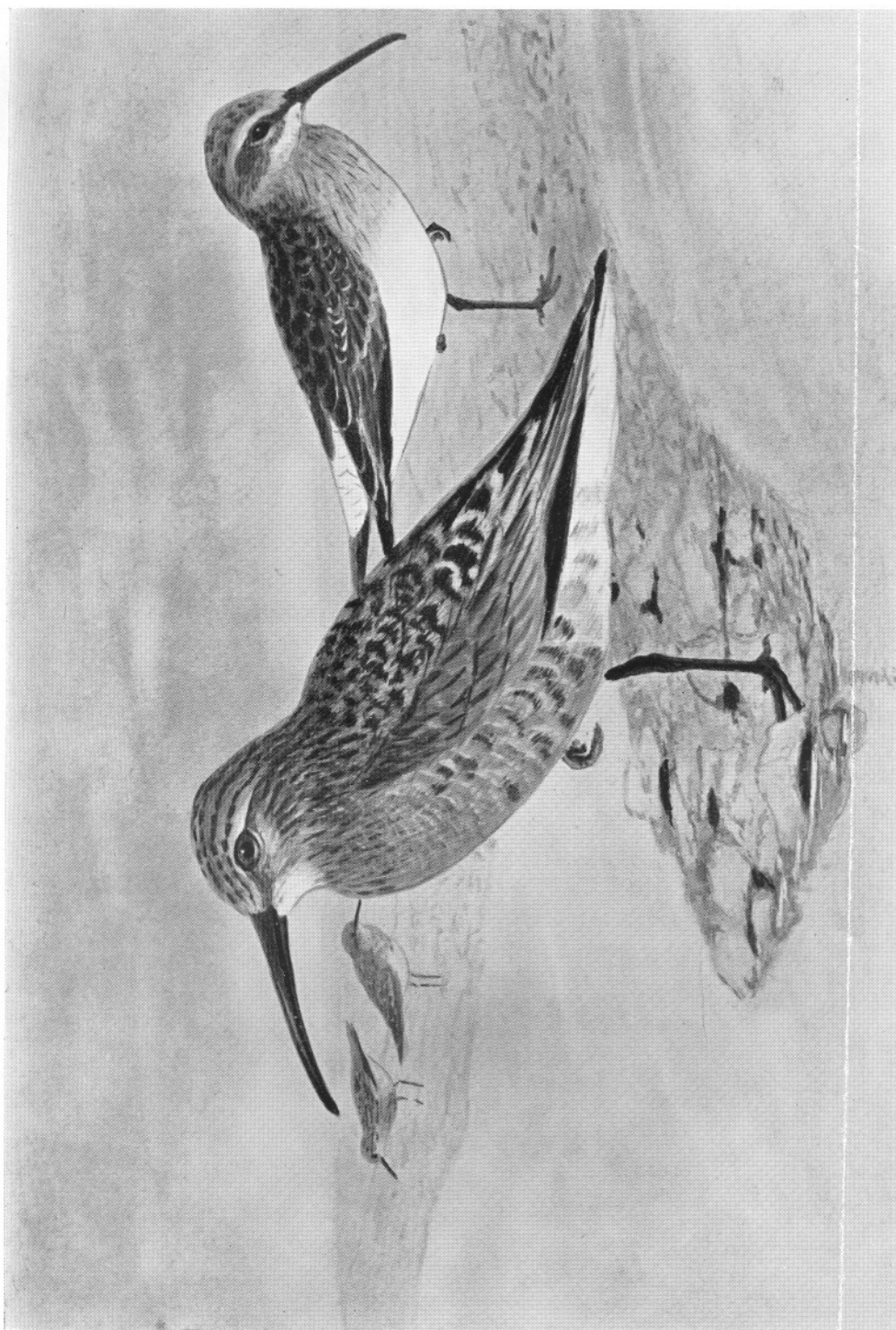
van Someren



JACK or LEAST SNIFE. (*Limnocryptes minima*, Brunn.)

van Someren

PLATE 14.



CURLEW SANDPIPER. (*Erolia testacea*, Pallas.)

van Someren.

Mantle and inner scapulars black with wide ochreous-buff border to outer webs, and small ochreous notching on inner; outer scapulars similar, but with more ochreous tawny notching and irregular cross bars; back blackish-brown with whitish to buffy tips to the feathers; upper tail-coverts sandy to ochreous buff with on the lateral ones black hastate centres, the inner ones with angled cross barring; tail: central pair mostly black with terminal $\frac{1}{4}$ cinnamon-orange, contrasting with the black, an irregular penultimate blackish line and buff tip; next pair, black less extensive, cinnamon-tawny bar wider, black irregular bar not so distal and tip white; third pair very similar but more whitish, especially the terminal one-third; others white with black cross bar mostly on the outer web. Tail feathers 16-18, *all broad*. Wings: primaries blackish-brown to sepia, first primary very minute, second with some dentate buffy marks on outer web, shaft yellowish, inner webs paler, tips narrowly white; secondaries: outer ones blackish-brown to sepia with white tips, inner ones with whitish to buffy obscure barring; innermost long ones with conspicuous buffy to whitish margins and tips and irregular buffy barring, the ground colour on the outer webs, black. Primary and greater coverts brownish-black with conspicuous white tips; median and lesser coverts brownish-black with large white tips and sandy bar at base of white; feathers at angle of wing with whitish margin to outer web giving this a streaky appearance.

Legs and feet yellowish-olive or greyish-olive; bill, black at tip, shading to yellowish at the base; eyes brown. Wings 138-149 mm. Bills 58-70, average 64 mm.

Sub-adult: Very similar to adult but less brightly coloured, the black less intense, and the feathers of the mantle and scapulars more mottled and barred with ochreous to buff. Legs and bill duller; eyes darker, more grey-brown. Tail more barred, especially on the outer ones.

As the birds do not breed here, we will not deal with the nestling or eggs.

HABITS :

The Great, Solitary, or Double Snipe arrives in these territories in October, usually about the middle, though some are a bit earlier, leaving again in the beginning of May, though many are observed up to May 28th. Some few have actually been shot at the end of June, and solitary birds as late as July. Though for the most part found in the vicinity of water, temporary swamps, margins of permanent swamps, swampy margins of streams and rivers and the marshy shores of lakes, one may flush these birds from grass land a long way from water. It often happens that when these birds have fed in the shallows they move into the shelter of low scrub and bush away from the water. It is often

the case that when a stretch of swamp has been walked over thoroughly twice, the birds will fly high and land in the grass and bush away from the water and not return for some time.

When these birds arrive, they do so in considerable numbers. The largest flock I personally have seen numbered well over two hundred. They are most in evidence on the northward move, and then may occupy a particular swamp for a week or two before moving on.

On the southward migration the whisps are smaller and more scattered, and if these birds are undisturbed some will remain throughout the winter months. Unfortunately, Snipe are not left alone. It is no uncommon occurrence, however, to find two or three birds along the marshy borders of streams and rivers for four months or more. Some local movement takes place during the birds' sojourn in this country; as swamps dry up they move off to more permanent water. On the whole they are more partial to shallow temporary water than is the Common Snipe.

Their flight is slow and more direct than in *C. gallinago* or the local *C. nigripennis*, in fact it is a heavy flight, and the birds are an easy mark for even a moderate shot. The largest bag I have counted was eighty brace to two guns in an early morning shoot. The flight is not sustained, and the birds literally drop to shelter. In thick grass these birds are sulky, and many have been captured by a dog I once owned. They feed in the shallows, not necessarily on mud flats, picking up insect larvae, small mollusca and crustacea, and worms. I have also known them to take very small tadpoles.

The weight of a full-fed female just before northward migration is over six ounces; the heaviest I have weighed was $8\frac{1}{2}$ ozs. They are always very well covered in fat and the feeding here seems to suit them admirably. However, it must be admitted, they are more "dirty" feeders than their cousins. I have noted several feeding on the fly-larvae infested dung of cattle, and also on the "night-soil" pits outside towns, the shallow trenches of which have been partly inundated with storm water and the surface a wriggling mass of fly larvae!

CAPELLA NIGRIPENNIS Bp.

AFRICAN BLACK-
WINGED SNIPE.

Ref. : Bonaparte, Icon. Faun. Ital., 1839.

Type locality : Cape of Good Hope.

DISTRIBUTION :

Sparsely throughout Uganda and Kenya in suitable localities.

DESCRIPTION : (Plate 11)

Male and female adult : Top of head with a black area, narrow at the base of the bill, then widening out, widest just behind the eyes and

tapering again at the occiput, this black is divided by an irregular buffy line from the bill to the nape; lores, supercillium, cheeks, and ear-coverts buffy-white, the lores with a blackish streak from nostrils through the eye and narrowly above the ear-coverts; cheeks and ear-coverts streaked with black; chin and throat whitish; neck buffy ground colour heavily streaked with blackish, more particularly on the front of the neck, down from the ear-coverts where the ground is more rufescent, and over the upper breast; sides of the breast with wide blackish-brown irregular angled bars; lower breast, abdomen to vent white; under tail-coverts buffy with dark barring and rufescent wash on the outer webs of lateral coverts; thighs mostly white with some dark barring; mantle darker (more black than migrant species), with the lateral feathers edged outwardly with ochreous-buff and some rufous spotting; scapulars similar but marginal ochreous-buff wider and more rufescent and with rufescent spotting; long scapulars more barred with rufescent to buff. Wings: primaries blackish-brown with paler inner webs, white tipped, second primary white on outer web; secondaries ground colour similar and tips broader white, innermost long secondaries with buffy barring mostly on outer web; primary coverts blackish-brown with white tips; median coverts with light tips and some buffy barring; lesser coverts with white tips. Back and rump blackish with buffy spotting shading to rufescent spotting; upper tail-coverts cinnamon buff with angled barring. Tail: central pair mostly jet black basally with a bright rufescent end sometimes a dentate mark of same colour toward mid-margin, a subterminal blackish wavy bar and buffy tip; next pair basally blackish, distal half rufescent with blackish wavy bars; next pair buffy with similar bars, the remainder paling to white with faint blackish bars, the outermost with blackish spots or longitudinal streak, *the two outer ones narrow*. (Plate 9a.)

Wings 125-237 mm.; bill 70-82 mm. Colour of legs and feet olive-yellowish to greyish-olive; bill blackish at tip shading to yellowish at base; eyes hazel or brown.

Immature: Less strongly marked than adults, wings more mottled and barred, some of the mottling extending on to outer webs of secondaries; head less black with light tips; tail less rufescent at the central pairs and more barred blackish.

Nestling: The ground colour of the down is rufescent, slightly paler on the wings; a pale loreal spot, and another under the eye; black down as follows, a spot above the base of the bill; a streak through the lores; irregular bars on the crown and above the eye; a narrow line below ears; two dorsal stripes, a patch on sides of the body; a patch on either side of the chest and a streak along the wings; lower surface of the body paler than upper, but the latter with pale tips to much of the down giving the stippled appearance.

HABITS :

The African Snipe is a bird of the highlands swamps, marshes, and lakes, margins of rivers and streams, and temporary pans.

It is never common anywhere, and beyond family parties, one usually observes them in pairs, not in large whisps. There is some local movement but this is due to drying up of waters and is not a definite migration. I have no records of this species from the coastal belt; on the other hand most records are from 3,000 to 10,000 feet, and sometimes 12,000 on the mountains. Breeding grounds have been located at high altitudes. The nest is situated in a tuft of grass, very well concealed by overhanging grass, and is sparsely lined. Two to three eggs are laid, buff to brown in ground colour, spotted and blotched with dark brown, sepia and with deeper marks of greyish. Average size 36 x 28.5 mm.; shape pyriform.

The breeding season is irregular; we have records in April-June, September, and January, doubtless influenced by the rains and permanence of swampy conditions.

If the parents are flushed from their nest they utter an alarm note, but I have never heard them making the "bleating" sound so typical of the European bird at nesting time.

They are good flyers but less erratic than is the European bird. After being flushed once or twice, they fly high and are difficult to flush again when they have alighted.

In general habits they resemble the Common Snipe, preferring the mud flats with sparse short vegetation for feeding grounds, but they will "lie up" in thicker reeds when resting. In the Nairobi area they are partial to portions of swamps and streams where cattle have been watered and the ground trodden and littered with droppings which are full of fly larvae; the snipe feed on the larvae.

The general diet is an insect one, usually larvae of flies and beetles, and nymhs of small odonata; worms and small crustacea and mollusca.

CAPELLA STENURA Bp.

INDIAN PIN-TAILED SNIPE.

Ref. : Bonaparte.

Type locality :

DISTRIBUTION :

Only recorded from Kenya once.

DESCRIPTION : (Plate 12)

Male adult : A black-brown area on the crown from the base of the bill, widest between the eyes and extending to the occiput, feathers with small rufescent spots at edges; in the centre of this black patch a buff irregular streak just short of the bill and running back to the nape;

supercillium buff, lores more ochreous; a black line from above gape to eye and extended back over ear-coverts; cheeks buffy as also ear-coverts, this latter with a black streak across centre; sides of face slightly spotted; chin and upper throat white; neck sandy-ochreous shading to greyish-buff on the breast, the greyish colour being due to dark bases of feathers, neck and breast streaked and slightly barred with blackish-brown; lower breast and abdomen white, flanks slightly more buffy and with dark grey-brown wavy bars; under tail-coverts buffy, lateral ones more rufescent and barred with blackish; mantle feathers with glossy black centres and wide buffy outer margins; inner scapulars similar, outer ones and long scapulars with glossy black centres conspicuous buffy outer border and rufescent wavy barring. Back and rump grey-brown with whitish to buff tips; upper tail-coverts sandy-buff with white tips and wavy cross-barring. Tail: 26 feathers; central pair basally black with a conspicuous rufous distal end with a subterminal wavy black bar and broad white tip shading to buff at the black bar; next four somewhat similar but rufescent zone not so bright and whitish tip broader; next two narrow and white with cross bars blackish, *outer seven very narrow indeed*, white with black streak. (Plate 9a.)

Wings: primaries deep sepia with narrow brownish edge to second one, whitish tips; secondaries similar, the long inner ones with alternate rusty and black wavy bars, primary coverts deep sepia to grey-black with white ends; greater coverts with wavy whitish to buffy bars; median coverts similar; lesser coverts with pale tips, and buffy bars, those at the upper edge not with bars but with pale edges and tips forming two light lines.

Bill 60 mm., yellowish-olive at base, blackish at tip; legs and feet olive-yellowish; eyes brown; wings 125 mm.

HABITS:

As already stated, this species is recorded from Africa on the evidence of one specimen taken on the Juba River by my collector in 1923. There appears no reason why the birds should not migrate to the east coast, but the only other record in this direction is one from Socotra. I have no personal knowledge of its habits except in Malaya, but they are said not to differ from those of the Common Snipe.

Genus *LIMNOCRYPTES*.

LIMNOCRYPTES MINIMA, Brunn. JACK or LEAST SNIPE.
Ref.: Brunnich, Orn. Borealis, 1764.
Type locality: Denmark.

DISTRIBUTION:

In Uganda and Kenya on margins of lakes, swamps, and rivers.

DESCRIPTION : (Plate 13)

Male and female : Head with a central black area very narrow at base of bill expanding abruptly in front of the eyes and extending to the nape, the black shot with greenish and each feather with rufescent margins; on either side of this black area a whitish buff streak from the mandible to the nape but not meeting the line on the opposite side; through this whitish zone is a blackish line above the eye; lores whitish-buff with a strong brownish streak from the nostril through the eye and above the ear-coverts; a further dark streak starts just short of the gape and extends back to the lower ear-coverts; chin and throat white; front and back of neck buffy streaked with black-brown, the streaks widening on the breast and more so on the flanks; belly and vent to under-tail-covert white, the latter with brownish streaks on the outer and long feathers; feathers of upper mantle brown tipped with white; lower mantle and scapulars black with green and purplish sheen and spotted with rufous and with ochreous to cinnamon, the outer webs with broad buffy margins and slight white tips, the long scapulars more strongly ochreous-buff on the outer webs contrasting with the velvety black on the inner which have rusty subterminal spots; back and rump with strong purple sheen; upper tail-coverts black centrally with rufous spots and wide buff edges, outer ones buff with black shaft streaks; tail pointed, the central feathers long, blackish in the centre with buffy edges and rufescent mottling and white tips. Wings: primaries dark black-brown with faint green sheen, inner ones with white tips, second primary with brownish on outer web; secondaries brown-black with white tips and the inner ones with buff to rusty freckling and barring, tips white; greater coverts brownish-black with olive-brown submargins and buff edges; median coverts very similar, pale tips broader; lesser coverts also similar but with pale edges, especially on the upper edge giving this a streaked appearance.

Bill black at tip, brown to yellowish-olive at base; legs and feet yellowish-olive with grey tinge; eyes brown; bill 38-42 mm.; wings 100-110 mm.

Immature and nestling : As the bird does not nest here we need not describe these stages. The sub-adult is very like the adult but is less glossed with green and purple on the mantle and back; the long scapulars and inner secondaries are more freckled.

HABITS :

In comparison with the Common and Great Snipe, this bird is but a rare migrant. Odd specimens are shot during the winter months and in twenty-five years I have not observed more than that number of specimens. The earliest date noted is October 6th, and the last before northward migration is March 30th.

All the specimens have been seen in marsh ground near lakes, swamps, and dams, on rivers where the grass has not been too rank and where areas of exposed mud provided feeding ground.

Its small size and glossy plumage should be sufficient to recognise this species from any other, furthermore *its tail is long and very pointed* and of a different shape to the Common Snipe.

It has not been noted in flocks, usually an odd bird here and there; not more than half a dozen have been flushed during a day's shoot at Nakuru or Naivasha. We have only noted it above 4,000 feet and up to 10,000 feet. Its flight is quick, not erratic and not sustained; soon drops into the grass and reeds and can be flushed several times. It feeds on insect larvae and worms, small mollusca and crustacea.

Genus *EROLIA*.

***EROLIA TESTACEA*, Pallas.**

CURLEW SANDPIPER.

Ref. : Pallas, Vroeg's Cat. Adumbrat, 1764.

Type locality : Holland.

DISTRIBUTION :

Breeds in the Arctic regions, North Asia. Winter visitor to Kenya and Uganda. Found on coast and also on inland waters.

DESCRIPTION : (Plate 14)

Adults, male and female, winter : Top of head, nape and hind neck, ashy-grey-brown, slightly paler on the nape, each feather with pale edges; mantle ashy-grey-brown with darker centres and pale edges and tips, almost whitish; black and centre of rump ashy-brown with darker shaft streak and pale edges; upper tail-coverts white, as also lateral rump feathers. Tail : central pair ashy-grey-brown with white shafts and pale edges, others more or less white with decreasing amount of ashy-grey at ends from within-out and edges whitish; chin and throat white; supercillium white; a dark loreal streak; cheeks and ear-coverts streaked ashy; upper breast lightly streaked with ashy-brown, more so on the sides; rest of under-surface white. Scapulars ashy-grey with pale edges and dark shaft streak; all coverts of wing ashy-brown with whitish edges; primaries dark sepia on outer-webs of outer ones, inner ones with narrow white edges and all paler on the inner webs, shafts white; secondaries ashy-brown with white edges and almost white inner webs, long ones like scapulars.

Male, spring and summer : Top of head and nape with blackish shaft streaks, whitish edges and tips which wear off revealing a bright rufous-cinnamon; whitish supercillium only slightly indicated; lores whitish with rufescent streak; cheeks spotted with rufescent-cinnamon; ear-coverts rufescent-cinnamon slightly streaked with blackish; throat

and upper breast orange-cinnamon with white tips which later wear off exposing the rufescent colour; lower breast similar but feathers with a subterminal sepia bar more pronounced at the sides; abdomen whitish with many feathers washed with orange cinnamon and with wider sepia subterminal bars; vent and under tail-coverts white with sepia cross barring widely apart; mantle and scapulars, blackish centred and rufescent cinnamon at sides and whitish tipped; long inner scapulars and long inner secondaries similarly coloured otherwise wings much as in winter but white tips to coverts less marked. Back and rump as winter but softer greyish; upper tail-coverts white barred with blackish and some orange-cinnamon proximal to the black bars; tail: generally more ashy-greyish than in winter.

The summer plumage is acquired by moult and many birds have not completed it by the time they leave for the north.

Wings, 120-135 mm. Bill down-curved toward end, 30-42 mm., black; legs and feet blackish.

Birds in intermediate plumage between the two phases described above are to be noted from December to June. Many sub-adult birds remain in their winter quarters until the following spring. Those staying any length of time on Lakes Nakuru and Magadi become very bleached by the action of the soda.

The nestling stage need not concern us as the birds do not breed here.

Sub-adult plumage, first winter: Resembles the winter plumage of the adults in nearly all respects; the general tone of the upper surface is, however, browner, due to the buffy edges and tips to the feathering.

HABITS :

The influx of these birds to Eastern Africa takes place at the end of August, when small flocks appear, to be augmented in considerable numbers at the end of September. By October all the birds have taken up residence in localities suitable to them.

They appear to be as partial to inland waters as to the coast and large flocks may be seen on such lakes as the Crater Lakes of Toro, Lake Kioga, portions of Lakes Victoria, Rudolf, Baringo, and Hannington, Lakes Nakuru, Elmenteita and Naivasha, and Magadi. Some few frequent the rivers and streams of the Masai country. They can at once be recognised when in flight, by the white rump and upper tail-coverts. On the lakes they keep to the flats and mud banks avoiding marshy ground overgrown with vegetation unless there is open shallow water. On the coast they are usually observed on the pebbly and sandy stretches, though when the tide is out they may be seen on the reefs and shallows. They associate in flocks both when resting and feeding;

many of the flocks contain up to a hundred birds. When flushed they rise with a twittering note which is maintained until they alight.

These birds indulge in evening exercises as do many of the smaller plover. They will get up in a bunch and then stream out in formation, and as though at a word of command the whole flock will wheel right or left, and doing this several times will pitch simultaneously on some mud-bank or sandy flat. They usually remain apart from other waders at feeding time but may occupy a sand-bank along with flocks of Ringed Plover and Sanderling.

Feeding takes place in the early morning and evening, but flighting birds may be observed and heard late at night. The food consists of crustacea, small mollusca, insects, and larvae.

The northward migration takes place toward the end of April and beginning of May; occasionally flocks in full plumage may still be here as late as the end of May. These late birds would have to travel to northern Siberia to breed, and return again by September, doing the double journey, and the raising of young all within four months.

EROLIA ALPINA ALPINA, Linn.

EUROPEAN DUNLIN.

Ref. : Linnaeus, Syst. Nat. 1758.

Type locality : Lapland.

DISTRIBUTION :

A breeding species in the northern part of Europe and Siberia, migrating to Indian Ocean littoral and along the east coast of Africa to as far south as Zanzibar.

DESCRIPTION : (Not figured)

Male and female, winter : Upper surface of head to nape, hind neck, mantle and scapulars, ashy-grey-brown with dark centres and slightly paler edges; back and rump darker with ashy-brown edges and tips down the centre, while lateral feathering white; upper tail-coverts similar; sides of face and lores white, the former streaked with ashy and the latter with a dark streak; supercillium white; chin and throat white; breast also white with ashy shading and dark shaft streaks; rest of underside white. Tail mostly ashy-grey with pale tips and central pair with dark shaft streak. Wings : blackish-brown, paler on the inner webs with increasing amount of white toward the base from the 6th inward; secondaries black-brown with white bases and white tips, the innermost short secondaries largely white; coverts dark ashy-brown with pale tips, widest on the greater coverts.

Bill and feet black; eyes brown; wings 105-114 mm.; bill 25-30.

Some birds are found to be in summer plumage before moving north, but the majority observed have moved before the full change has taken place.

Summer : Top of head dark-brownish with black shafts and rufous edged; neck buff with dark streaks and rufescent tinged; mantle and scapulars black-brown with conspicuous cinnamon and rufescent edges; back similar; upper tail-coverts blackish-brown with irregular rufescent margins; tail black-brown with rufescent edges; sides of head whitish to buff with dark brown streaking; supercillium white; chin and throat white, throat streaked brown; breast buffy with heavy black streaking the black increasing on the belly and the flanks with brownish marks; vent and under tail-coverts white with black or sepia spots. Wings as in winter but edges tinged with buffy and rufescent on inner secondaries and coverts.

As the species does not breed in our territories the nestling and juvenile need not be described.

HABITS :

The Dunlin has only been recorded a very few times from Eastern Africa, on both inland waters of Uganda and on the Kenya coast. It doubtless occurs in greater numbers than the records would suggest. It associates with flocks of other small plover and Sanderlings and frequents the same type of ground.

EROLIA MINUTA, Leisl.

LITTLE STINT.

Ref. : Leisler, Nachtr. zu Bechst Naturg., Deutschl.

Type locality : Germany.

DISTRIBUTION :

Northern Europe, breeding in the extreme north; migrating to Eastern Africa in winter where it is to be found on many of the lakes and along the maritime shore.

DESCRIPTION : (Plate 15)

Male and female, winter : Forehead, chin and throat, white; lores ashy, side of face and ear-coverts whitish, the latter streaked ashy; top of head to nape ashy-brown with slightly paler edges; side of neck slightly paler and more streaky; mantle and scapulars ashy-brown with dark shaft streak and paler greyish edges and white tips to long scapulars; centre of back, rump and upper tail-coverts ashy-brown, sides white; wing-coverts ashy-brown with pale edges, slightly darker on the bend; greater coverts strongly tipped white, forming a bar; primaries ashy-brown to sepia with paler inner webs, and white shafts; inner primaries with narrow white on outer webs; secondaries sepia with pale inner webs and some white at base, long secondaries as scapulars; tail, central pair sepia, rest ashy-grey, all with whitish tips; under surface white, with dark shafts to the lateral breast and ashy shading.

Male and female, summer : Forehead, chin, and throat white, with a whitish supercillium and eyelids; side of face white finely streaked with brownish; lores rufescent, this colour extending to the ear-coverts, both dark streaked; crown and nape with dark sepia centres to each feather, broadly margined with rusty and edged with buffy to white; mantle and scapulars with deep sepia to black centres contrasting with cinnamon-orange to rusty border and whitish to greyish tips; long inner secondaries similarly coloured; inner greater coverts and median coverts broadly edged cinnamon; rest of wing as winter; centre of back, rump and upper tail-coverts dark sepia with rusty borders and greyish tips; central tail feathers dark sepia with wide rufescent border, remainder as winter, some of the inner ones with rusty wash on outer webs. Remainder of plumage as winter, with sides of breast tinged with rufescent.

Bill short, straight, slightly enlarged at tip, 17-20 mm., black. Legs and feet black; eyes grey-brown to brown. Wings 90-101 mm.

Sub-adult : Distinguished by the buffy margins to upper feathers from crown to central rectrices, and buffy wash on sides of upper breast. Wing-coverts strongly buffy tipped and bordered, greater-coverts with wide white tips. Such birds are usually seen from August to November.

The moult from winter to spring is a gradual one; many of the adult birds have not assumed full plumage when they leave for the north. Many start to assume spring plumage in January.

The nestling plumage will not be discussed as the species does not breed in these latitudes.

HABITS :

The Little Stint is one of the common migrants to these countries and arrives very early, many being noted in August; the majority however, arrive in September, most of them juvenile, to be followed later by the adults which make their appearance in October.

The juvenile birds are to be recognised by the buffy tone to the upper plumage. Many of the adults are already assuming the winter dress : an ashy-grey plumage as described.

These birds are, in my experience, more common on the inland waters than on the coast. Very large flocks are to be met with on the larger lakes such as Rudolf, Baringo, Nakuru, Naivasha, Elmenteita, and Magadi, and on swamps, and marshy portions of rivers and quite commonly in small bunches on many of the smaller streams of the more open country.

They are the smallest of the visiting waders and are very tame and confiding. They feed largely on insects and larvae (fly and beetle), small crustacea and mollusca, and small seeds.

When feeding they string-out and seek their food along the margin of the water and in the shallows, and when at rest they bunch together in groups, often associated with other waders.

When flushed they rise and twist and turn so as to become almost invisible; their small size and quick flight render them inconspicuous.

It is no uncommon thing to find a few of this species throughout the summer months on some of the inland waters of Kenya; they are probably birds of the previous year which would not breed, and some adults which for some reason have "over-stayed." Birds of June and beginning of August are of these categories. The northward move takes place at the end of April and mid May.

Genus *CROCETHIA*.

CROCETHIA ALBA, Pallas.

SANDERLING.

Ref. : Pallas, in Vroeg's Catal. Adumbrat, 1764.

Type locality : North Sea.

DISTRIBUTION :

As a breeding species, only in the Arctic, migrating to Africa for the winter.

DESCRIPTION : (Plate 16)

Male and female, winter. Fore portion of head and supercillium, white; round eye, crown to nape and upper mantle light ashy-grey streaked with sepia; ear-coverts white slightly streaked at upper part; sides of upper breast washed with ashy and with faint central streaks; rest of underside from chin to under tail-coverts white; mantle and scapulars pale ashy-grey with dark shaft streaks and whitish margins and tips, long inner secondaries darker greyish; primaries greyish-black with paler inner webs, white shafts except at ends, inner ones with narrow white tips and white on outer webs at base; secondaries dark-ashy at ends white basally, the amount of blackish at ends gradually decreasing from out inward, the 9th and 10th being almost pure white, the long inners as long scapulars; primary and greater coverts grey-black with wide white ends forming a distinct bar; median coverts ashy-grey centrally and broadly whitish at borders, lesser coverts darker and with blackish shaft streak, bend of wing almost blackish. Back and rump and upper tail-coverts ashy with dark centres and pale borders, lateral feathers white; tail: central pair dark ashy toward ends, paler proximally, remainder paler ashy-white edged and basally white. Bill black, 23-27 mm.; legs and feet black; eyes brown. Wings 117-125 mm. No hind toe.

Spring and summer : Forehead and supercillium pinkish-cinnamon, crown with black centres broadly edged with pink-cinnamon and fine white tips (tips wear off rapidly), sides and back of neck slightly paler bordered and blackish streaked; mantle and scapulars black centrally with irregular rufescent-cinnamon borders and whitish tips; back, rump, and upper tail-coverts dark centrally, with rufescent borders and pale tips; white laterally; tail as winter, the outer border of outer rectrices barred ashy; lower neck and breast washed with pink-cinnamon, shaft streaks sepia, slight mottling and whitish tips; rest of underside white.

Sub-adult or juvenile : Forehead, lores and cheeks white, lores with slight dusky streak; ear-coverts slightly streaked at upper part; supercillium whitish streaked sepia. Crown sepia with some whitish to buff tips; neck and upper mantle white with dusky sepia streaks; mantle and scapulars dark blackish sepia tipped and edged with buffy and ochreous; back, rump and upper tail-coverts sepia centred with buffy to ochreous borders and white tips, lateral feathering white; tail as winter adult; median coverts mostly buffy with dark shafts; most lesser coverts dark sepia with slight buffy to white tips. Underside wholly white, with slight ashy on the sides of upper breast.

The nestling does not interest us as the bird is only a winter migrant to these parts.

HABITS :

The short straight bill slightly swollen at the tip, feet with only three toes and very pale grey (winter) plumage should distinguish this bird from other small waders. It is to be met with in fair numbers on the inland waters of Kenya and Uganda and in greater numbers along the coast; it is undoubtedly more a bird of the maritime shore than fresh water.

They associate in flocks, often mixed with Ring Plover and other waders, keeping to the water's edge when the tide is in or on the fringe of shallow pools on the coral reefs at low tide.

When resting, they select some exposed sand bank, and most of the birds will face one way, usually into the wind.

When feeding they keep to the margin of the water or walk in shallows up to their "knees," picking up small crustacea and mollusca, larvae of various kinds and remnants of small fish and shrimps.

First arrivals have been noted in September; most birds are in residence by October and remain with us until April or beginning of May. Most October birds are in full winter dress and many seen in April are in almost complete spring plumage. Large numbers of the October birds are juvenile in first winter plumage; they are darker above than adults.

Genus *CALIDRIS*.

CALIDRIS CANUTUS CANUTUS, Linn.

The KNOT.

Ref. Linnaeus, Syst. Nat., 1758.

Type locality : Sweden.

DISTRIBUTION :

Breeding in the Arctic these birds migrate to Africa but only sparingly on the eastern side.

DESCRIPTION : (Not figured)

Adult, winter : Upper surface from crown to mantle and scapulars ashy-grey with dark brownish centres, pale borders and whitish tips; fore part of head white, this colour extending over the eye; ear-coverts and side of neck streaked dusky; loreal streak greyish. Upper breast white with brownish streaks, lower breast ashy-grey with dark shaft streaks; lower surface of body white, slightly barred brownish on the flanks; under tail-coverts white with some irregular sepia barring. Back and rump ashy-grey with darker brownish subterminally and tipped white; lower rump and upper tail-coverts white with irregular sepia barring. Wings : sepia to dark black-brown, paler on inner webs and whitish at bases, the inner ones with narrow white on outer webs; secondaries similarly coloured with outer margin white, while inner long ones as mantle and scapulars; greater coverts grey-brown, white tipped; median and lesser coverts ashy-grey with whitish border and tips, the small ones at upper margin of wing darker blackish and with only narrow pale edging.

I have never noted this species in spring plumage and as it is a very rare migrant to these parts this dress will not be described here. Bill black, legs and feet olive, eyes brown. Wings 160-170 mm. Bill, 30-35 mm. Legs short 30 mm.

HABITS :

Little is known of the movements of these birds in eastern Africa. Few examples have been noted of recent years. Along the coast a few were seen at Kismayu at the mouth of the Juba River; a small flock was observed on the reefs at Tiwi, but no specimens have been seen recently. In 1906 several specimens were taken on the crater lakes of Toro. Its squat build and short legs, coupled with its greyish fore-parts should distinguish this bird from other shore waders; on inland waters it might be confused with the Ruffs and Reeves in winter plumage, but the short dark legs as compared with the yellow legs of the Ruff should prevent confusion.

Genus *PHILOMACHUS*.

PHILOMACHUS PUGNAX, Linn.

RUFF and REEVES.

Ref. : Linnaeus, Syst. Nat., 1758.

Type locality : Sweden.

DISTRIBUTION :

Breeding in the northern portions of Central Europe, this species migrates to Africa during the autumn.

DESCRIPTION : (Plate 17)

Winter : Forehead and lores whitish with dusky streaking; crown and nape ashy-brown with dark shaft streaks and paler edges; mantle, scapulars sepia-ashy, slightly darker on shafts and ashy-ochreous borders or greyish-ashy edges; back, and centre of rump and middle upper tail-coverts dark sepia with paler edges, lateral feathering white; ear-coverts pale ashy grey, streaked with sepia; chin and upper throat white, lower throat and upper breast ashy-brown with broad white tips; flanks similarly coloured, and rest of underside white; tail: central pair ashy-brown with dark sepia shaft streak and blackish at end, outer ones ashy-grey with subterminal darker band and buffy edges and tips; wings: primaries sepia-brown with inner webs paler and whitish at bases, shafts white; secondaries with ashy-brown toward ends and increasingly white at bases, and with white on outer webs; long inner secondaries ashy with darker sepia to black submarginal line and white to buffy border; coverts dark sepia tipped with white; lesser coverts ashy-brown with dark shafts and whitish border.

Spring : I have never noted a Ruff in anything approaching full dress just before the spring migration.

The usual plumage just before migration differs from that of the winter in being much more speckled. The top of the head, hind-neck, and sides of the face become spotted with black on a buff ground; the throat is white strongly spotted with black; lower throat and upper breast mottled with black; the lower breast and flanks with large blackish centres to the feathers and pale shafts and white tips; these latter wear off showing up the black mottling. Feathers of the mantle and scapulars, with buffy edges surrounding purply-black; long scapulars and long inner secondaries with alternate bars of sandy and black with a large subterminal purply-black spot, tips greyish; primaries as in winter but inner secondaries with buffy barring on outer webs; greater and median coverts barred sandy and blackish with grey at ends and white tipped; lesser coverts like winter, with a dark spot on outer webs and white tipped. Tail as winter, except that central two pairs are alternately barred buffy and blackish, and outer pairs with black spots. There is some variation in the plumages: in some the

light barring is chestnut; in others white, contrasting with the blackish barring.

Legs and feet yellowish or orange; eyes brown; bill brown-black with fleshy-colour toward base, 35-40 mm. Wings, 188-198 in males, 145-159 in females.

HABITS :

This species is a common migrant to Uganda and Kenya, most often met with on inland waters, but also noted on the coast.

The date of arrival is somewhat difficult to ascertain as many birds remain over from the previous winter migration; thus July and August birds are undoubtedly of this category. The influx has been noted towards the end of September, mostly immature birds, followed later by adults in winter dress, or partial moult, some few still possessing remnants of the "ruff" as evidenced by brown, black, or white feathers. The moult is soon completed.

These waders frequent the mud flats and marshy ground along the lake shores and banks of rivers, avoiding the swampy lush grass, for they prefer the more open areas. Lake Nakuru is particularly frequented by this species, as are also Elmenteita and Lake Rudolf.

They are not found in flocks as are some of the migratory plover, but usually in small parties of three to half a dozen, associating with other waders. Single birds are frequently flushed along the flood banks of streams and rivers.

Their food consists mostly of insects in various stages, worms and mollusca and crustacea. Seeds of waterweeds are also eaten, such as rumex, and grass seeds.

Genus *TEREKIA*.

TEREKIA CINEREA, Gould.

TEREK SANDPIPER.

Ref. : Guldensadt, Nov. Comm. Petrop., 1775.

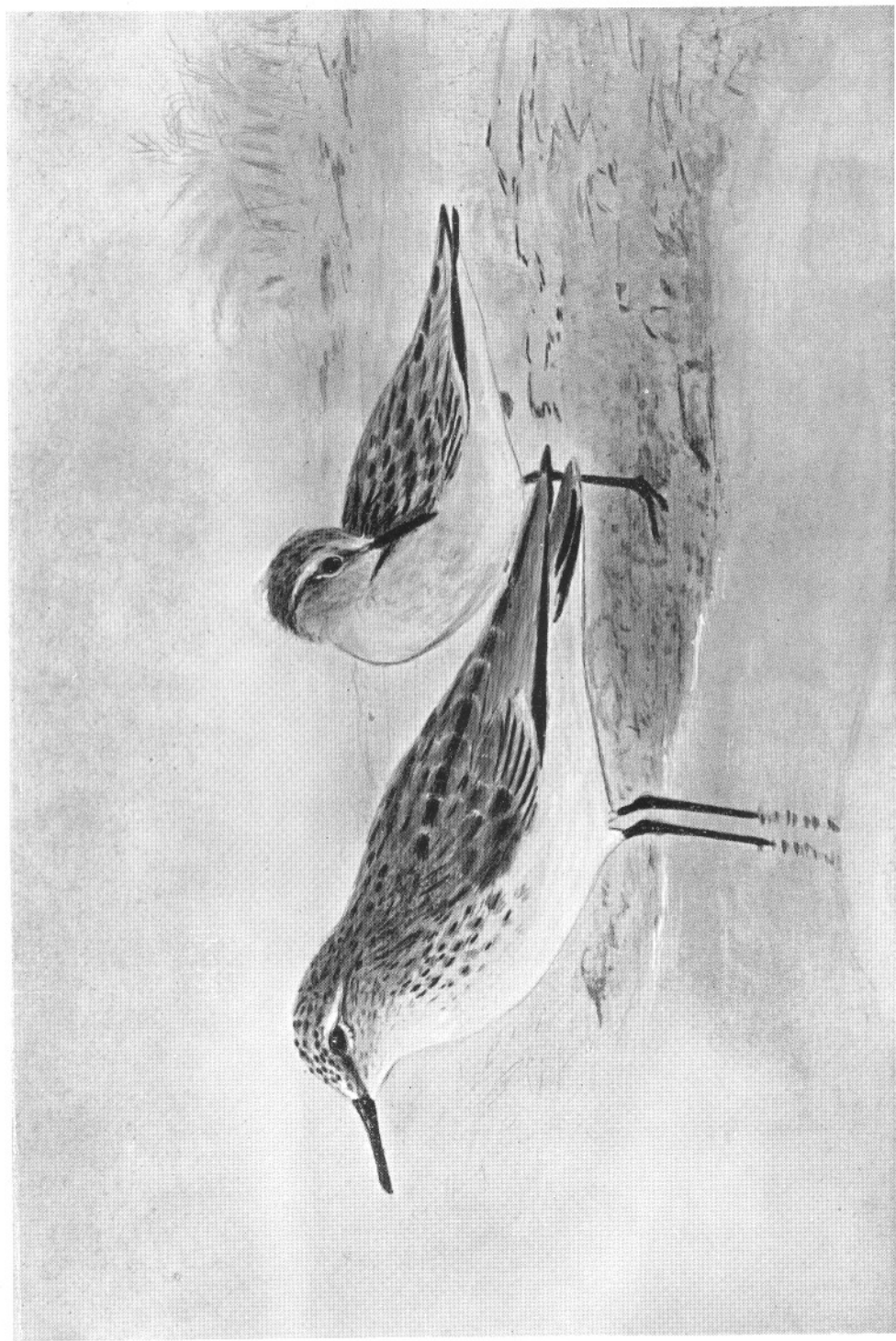
Type locality : Terek River, S.E. Russia.

DISTRIBUTION :

A migrant from Northern Europe and Asia, and wintering on the coast of India and Africa.

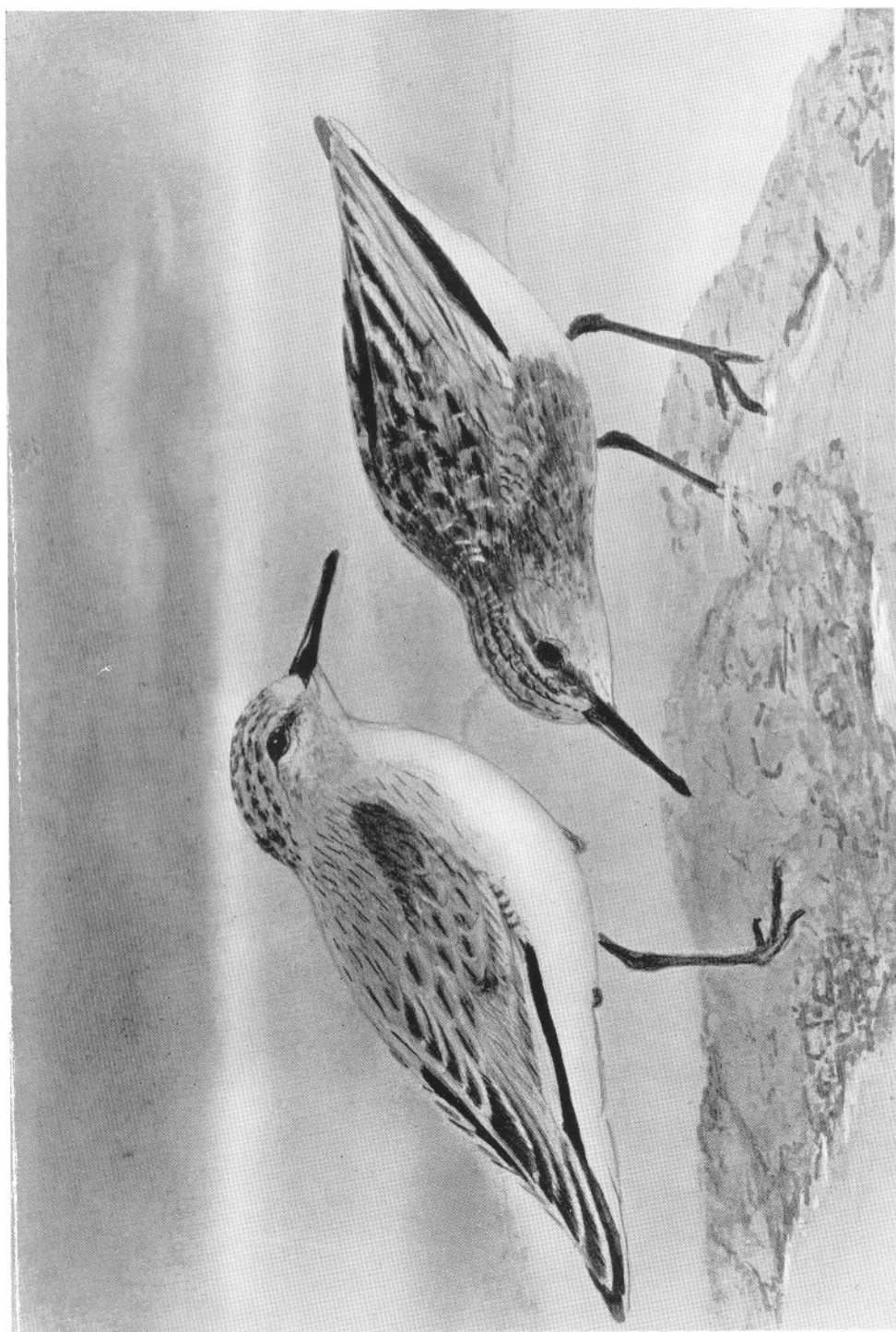
DESCRIPTION : (Plate 18)

Winter : Forehead, lores, cheeks, and throat, white; crown nape, hind neck, ashy-grey with fine dark shaft streaks; mantle and scapulars, ashy-grey with dark shaft streaks, almost black on the long scapulars; back, centre of rump and upper tail-coverts ashy-grey, later feathering



LITTLE STINT. (*Erolia minuta*, Leisl.)

van Someren.



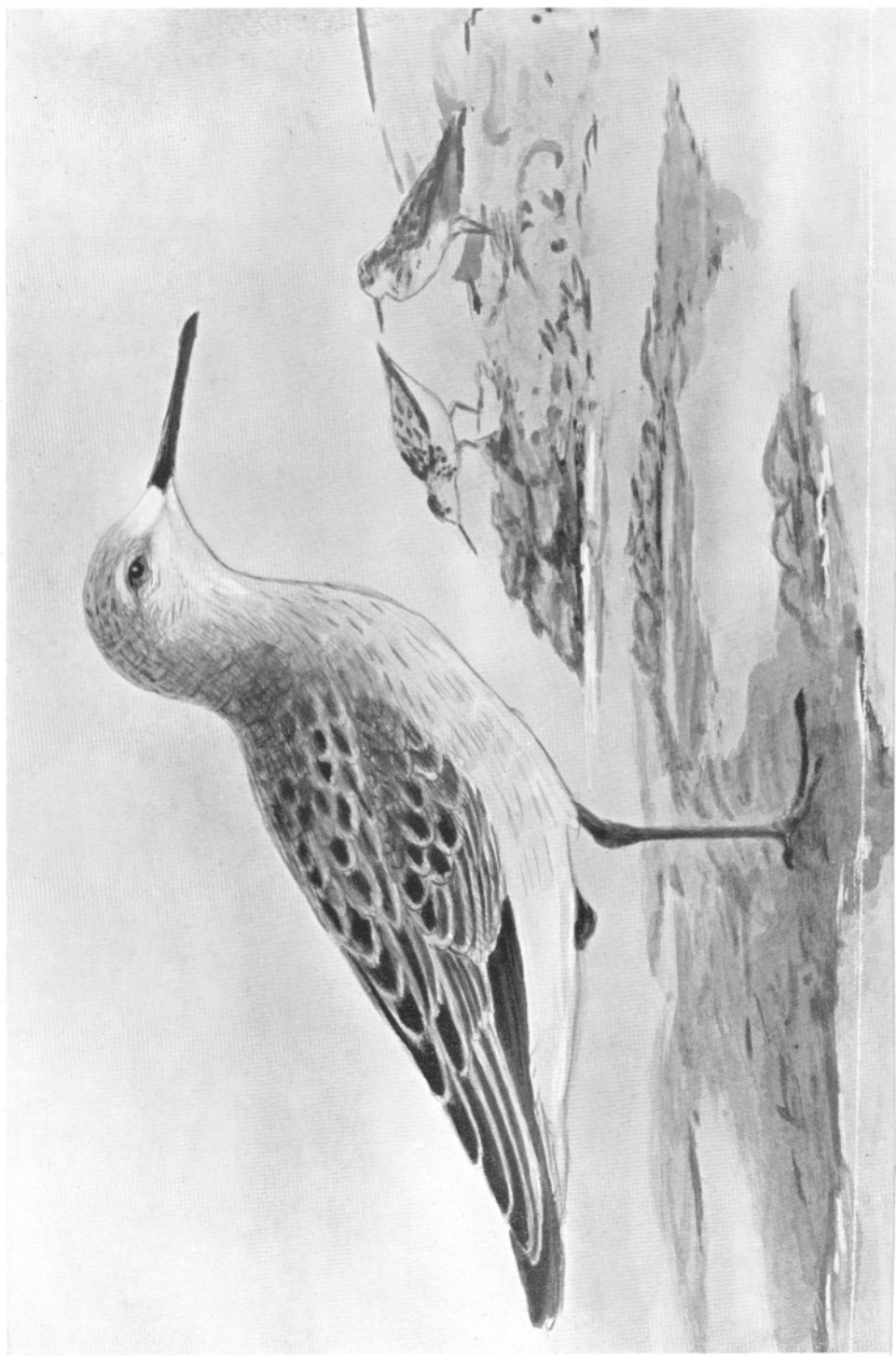
Winter.

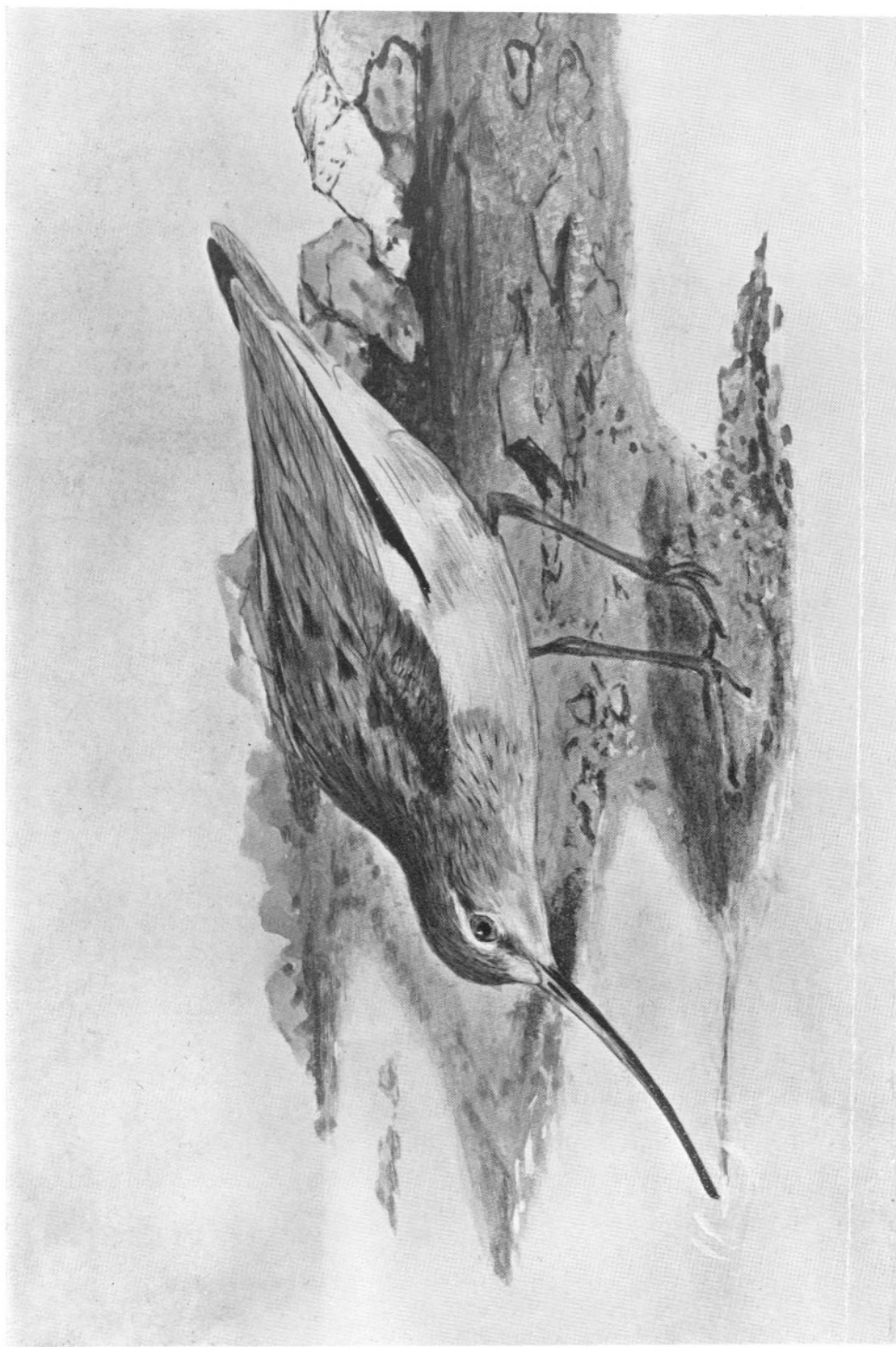
SANDERLING. (*Crocethia alba*, Pallas.)

Summer.

van Someren.

PLATE 17.





van Someren.

TEREK SANDPIPER. (*Terekia cinerea*, Guld.)

white; tail ashy grey; later upper tail-coverts with dark submarginal bordering; upper chest whitish streaked with blackish, lateral aspect shaded with ashy-grey and with dark shaft streaks; rest of underside white. Primaries sepia-blackish, inner ones paler; secondaries ashy-brown-grey at base with wide white ends forming a conspicuous bar; greater coverts dark-ashy with wide white tips; median coverts paler ashy-grey, and lesser coverts slightly darker ashy.

Spring : The moult takes place in January and extends up to the time of leaving; very few birds are in full dress when due to leave. The chief difference compared with winter dress is the arrow-like blackish centres to the feathers of the mantle and scapulars, and more strongly streaked head and sides of the breast; the general plumage is a cleaner grey, though still ashy tinged.

Bill long and *up-curved* 48-53 mm. long, yellowish at base and brown-black toward tip which is broadened and slightly hooked. Legs and feet yellow to orange; eyes red-brown.

HABITS :

This interesting bird is not commonly met with. A few examples have been noted along the coast of Kenya especially north of Mombasa where they frequented the reefs when the tide was out. Others have been noted and collected on the Juba River as far up as Dolo.

They were particularly plentiful just before the northward movement at Lamu and Manda in March and April. They associate with other waders and plovers but can always be recognised by their up-curved bills, and slender graceful build. They feed along the edge of the water taking small crustacea and mollusca and aquatic insects. In general behaviour they resemble the Sandpipers.

The wide white wing bar helps to distinguish this species, when in flight, from other Sandpipers.

Genus *ACTITIS*.

ACTITIS HYPOLEUCOS, Linn.

COMMON EUROPEAN
SANDPIPER.

Ref. : Linnaeus, Syst. Nat., 1758.

Type locality : Sweden.

DISTRIBUTION :

Europe and Asia in summer, migrating south in winter and widely distributed through Africa, particularly plentiful in Kenya and Uganda. Also resident in East Africa.

DESCRIPTION : (Plate 19)

Male and female : A white stripe above and below the eye from base of bill; a sepia loreal streak; cheeks and side of neck white streaked with fine blackish, throat white; crown, nape, olive-brown with sepia shaft streaks; mantle, scapulars, back and rump olive with a bronzy sheen, with sepia shaft streaks, subterminal dark bar and buff narrow tips, the long scapulars and long inner secondaries with dark mottling and incomplete barring; upper tail-coverts similar; tail olive-brown, in central area with white tips, incomplete dark barring and dentate marks, outer pairs white with sepia barring more sparse on outer webs; lower throat white with sepia streaks, sides of breast washed with ashy-grey and with sepia shaft streaks, rest of lower surface white. Wings : primaries sepia with narrow white tips, and a white patch on the inner webs from 3rd inward; secondaries sepia tipped white and with a conspicuous white bar across middle; greater coverts sepia with slight darker barring and broad white tips; median coverts olive brown with dark barring and buff tips with some buff dentate marks at edges; lesser coverts more strongly barred olive-brown blackish and buff.

There is some variation in plumages of the adults : some are more strongly bronzy-olive giving a general browner tone to the upper side; some have the subterminal dark barring of the scapulars and mantle broad and the shaft streak equally conspicuous, thus giving a mottled appearance to the upper side; others again have the dark markings very narrow and less conspicuous rendering the upperside more uniformly olive.

Bill straight, 23-25 mm., dark brown, yellowish at base of lower; legs and feet olive-grey, or greenish-grey; eyes brown. Wings 105-115 mm.

The immature birds are to be distinguished by their more whitish barring at the tips to the mantle, scapular and wing coverts; the tips of the upper mantle and nape to crown being tipped with buff; tail feathers tipped buff.

Nestling in down : A dark central line from base of bill over the crown, down the hind neck to back where it widens in the inter-scapular regions; above the eye a buffy to whitish area slightly dark mottled; a black streak running through the eye from gape to ears; eyelids white; cheeks and throat and all the underside white; wings except tips which are white, back and tail mottled buffy and black tips; legs and feet grey-green.

HABITS :

The Common Sandpiper is to a certain extent resident in both Kenya and Uganda, and even breeds here. It is, however, mostly a migrant to these countries from Europe and Asia. The majority of visitors from the north have put in an appearance by September and

October and distribute themselves on most of the lakes, artificial waters (such as dams), rivers and streams. Never in flocks—though several may be noted within a short stretch—they occur in twos or threes along the shores of the lakes or single birds may be noted on streams and rivers, and often on temporary water pans either on the plains or alpine regions (Aberdares, 10,000).

Their characteristic jerky interrupted flight, bobbing, and up and down movement of the tail, at once make these birds recognisable.

They are not by any means confined to inland waters, for they are equally common along the coast; not so much on the actual sea front as along the tidal creeks and mangrove swamps.

They keep to the more open banks and shallow water, and on waters where water-lilies are plentiful they spend most of their time on the large flat surfaces of these plants, rather than on the shore.

The food consists of insects and their larvae, mollusca and crustacea captured along the water's edge. Areas covered in water-lilies prove a good hunting ground, and here the small larvae and pupae or the "damselflies" are much sought after.

The nest and young have been recorded in Uganda in June, and birds in breeding condition have been shot in Kenya in May. The nest is a scrape in tussock grass or by a clump whose leaves hang over and give shade and protection. The eggs are buff to reddish, with darker red and brown spots and blotches toward the larger end. The nest is sparingly lined with grass fibre and odd leaves.

We have taken or observed these Sandpipers throughout all months of the year on Lakes Nakuru and Naivasha, but the bulk have gone north by the end of May.

Genus *TRINGA*.

TRINGA OCHROPUS, Linn.

GREEN SANDPIPER.

Ref. Linnaeus, Syst. Nat., 1758.

Type locality: Sweden.

DISTRIBUTION:

North Europe and Asia in the summer, migrating to the south in autumn and common in Kenya and Uganda during the winter.

DESCRIPTION: (Plate 20)

Male and female adult, winter: Crown, nape to upper mantle olive-grey-brown with dark shafts; lores and supercillium white, the former with a dark streak through the eye to the upper ear-coverts; cheeks white with blackish streaks; throat white. Mantle and scapulars and

long inner secondaries, back and upper rump olive-grey-brown with a more olive tinge on the scapulars, each feather with dark shaft streak, alternate dark and buffy spots along margin and an incomplete dark subterminal bar; the whole upper surface has therefore a spotted appearance. Lower back and rump as back but tips whitish; upper tail-coverts white; tail mostly white with increasing number of blackish bars from second outer to mid pair. Lower throat and centre of breast white with sepia streaking, sides of breast washed with grey-ashy and alternately barred buffy and dark grey or streaked. Rest of underside white. Under wing-coverts and axillaries black with narrow white cross bars. Wings: Primaries blackish with olive sheen, inner webs paler; secondaries olive-blackish, greater and median coverts olive-black-brown, with some paler spotting on the medians; lesser coverts olive-brown with small buffy marginal spots alternating with dark spots.

Bill black, greenish at base 33-35 mm. Legs and feet olive-green; eyes brown. Wings 135-150 mm. Females the larger.

Summer: In both sexes, the most noticeable change is in the more boldly streaked head and neck, the more conspicuous white to buffy spotting on the mantle and scapulars and the more boldly streaked sides of the breast.

Sub-adult: Very like winter plumage, but general tone less olive tinged and the spotting more buffy and grey-tipped. The lower throat and sides of breast more washed greyish and finely streaked.

HABITS:

As with most other Sandpipers, these birds are partial to mudflats and banks on lake shore and rivers, dams, and temporary water pans, and along streams. Most numerous on the larger lakes, one nevertheless frequently meets single examples on the alpine streams and marshes. They may be distinguished in flight by their dark wings, without a white bar, and very white tail with black-barred area limited to a triangle centrally. When handled, the black underwing coverts with narrow white bars are a distinguishing character.

These birds are exceptionally restless and shy and get up at the slightest alarm. As they rise they utter their characteristic call of three notes like "tui tui tui" sharp and high pitched. The flight is not sustained but is erratic and swift. If flushed more than twice it will fly off and circle round, but if the water is limited one may count on the bird eventually returning to the same spot from which it was put up.

They appear to select certain types of marsh or lake-side on which they resort day after day—probably a matter of feeding—and one may find the birds there at almost any time; so also certain stretches of a stream are frequented, places, for example, where cattle have been led

to water, where the ground has been trodden and small puddles formed at the water's edge, and the ground littered with droppings. Here one will note the birds feeding on the fly maggots which breed in the dung. Other food, such as insects and larvae, mollusca, and small crustacea are taken at the water's edge of mud flats.

One does not see these birds in flocks; many, however, may be seen scattered over a suitable stretch of lake front. They do not frequent the water-lily covered parts of the lake as do the Common Sand-piper but are more partial to mud and sand banks.

It is a common migrant and has been recorded on all the lakes of Uganda and Kenya and most of the rivers where exposed flats have been formed during flood time.

Though many examples have been noted throughout the entire year in Kenya, the species is not known to breed here. The time of influx of birds from the north is during the latter part of September, and the northward move takes place in April and May.

TRINGA STAGNATALIS, Bechst. **MARSH SANDPIPER.**

Ref.: Bechstein, Ornith. Taschenb., 1803.

Type locality: Germany.

DISTRIBUTION:

Breeding in Siberia and eastern Europe, this species migrates south in the autumn, many frequenting the lakes of Uganda and Kenya during the winter.

DESCRIPTION: (Plate 21)

Male and female, adult, winter: Whole of the front of the head white with a supercillium of the same colour extending back to upper ear-coverts; ear-coverts white streaked sepia; top of head ashy-grey streaked sepia and white tipped; nape, mantle, scapulars, and long inner secondaries ashy-grey with dark shafts and conspicuous white tips and narrow white edges; sides of neck, throat and whole of underside white; back and rump white; upper tail-coverts white with sepia to blackish freckling on the outer webs. Wings: primaries sepia-blackish, outer ones darker, second with white shaft, paler on inner webs and slightly freckled; secondaries more ashy-grey-sepia with narrow white outer margin and white tips, long inner as scapulars; greater coverts like secondaries, median, and lesser coverts ashy-grey-brown with black shafts and white tips. Under-wing-coverts and axillaries white.

Summer: Male: The chief change is a profuse black spotting and mottling of the upper plumage and breast. Throat, front of neck and breast spotted with round sepia spots changing to wavy barring on the

flanks; crown with conspicuous black central spot and ashy-grey edges, neck streaked blackish and white; mantle conspicuously spotted with blackish, margins and tips grey; scapulars grey-buff with black shafts, black transverse incomplete bars and zig-zag marks to margin, tips white; wings as winter, except that median coverts now have conspicuous black subterminal irregular bars and white tips; lesser coverts grey with white tips; back and rump white; upper tail-coverts more black barred; and tail feathers, particularly central ones with sepia bars and sub-marginal line. In some specimens the general tone of the upper side is tinged pinky-buff.

Sub-adult: Very like winter birds but general tone of upperside less grey more tinged brownish.

Legs and feet greenish-grey; long and slender. Eyes brown; bill slender and long 38-45 mm., slightly up-curved.

HABITS :

The marsh sandpiper makes its appearance in Uganda and Kenya toward the end of September and beginning of October, odd birds being noted here and there on the larger lakes, swamps, dams, rivers and streams. In general habits it resembles the Green Sandpiper, but from this and others it can at once be distinguished by its very long slender legs, long bill, and paler plumage; also by its white back and rump as it flies.

The localities frequented by this species resemble those enumerated for the Green Sandpiper, but it is less often noted on upland streams. They dislike deep water and for this reason are found at the shallow edges of lakes and swamps, on mud flats and sand-banks. On Lake Rudolf they are plentiful, but never in flocks.

They associate with other waders at feeding time and take most of their food in the shallow water. Stomach dissection reveals the presence of insect larvae of various kinds including Diptera and Coleoptera, small mollusca and crustacea.

When flushed, they rise with a high pitched "tuit" repeated twice in succession; the flight is jerky and the long legs are left trailing and pendent, for the flight is not long sustained if the birds are not over-disturbed.

There is a certain degree of congregating as the northward migration approaches; this takes place in April. The birds breed in Siberia and Russia and eastern Europe in May, so that examples noted in Kenya and Uganda after that date are probably non-breeders or birds of the previous season. We have records of specimens taken in May to August, but all are sub-adult or ill-conditioned adults.

All these migratory waders are exceptionally fat and heavy due possibly to the good feeding, but many are infested with intestinal worms which no doubt undermine the general tone.

TRINGA GLAREOLA, Linn.

WOOD-SANDPIPER.

Ref. : Linnaeus, Syst. Nat., 1758.

Type locality : Sweden.

DISTRIBUTION :

Breeding in Northern Europe and Asia ; migrating south to Africa and South Asia and Australia for the winter.

DESCRIPTION : (Plate 22)

Male and female, adult, winter : Top of head sepia-olive slightly darker along shafts and pale edged ; nape and hind-neck similar ; a distinct white streak over the eye from nostril to above the ear-coverts ; loreal streak sepia ; eyelids white ; cheeks and ear-coverts white streaked with sepia ; throat white ; breast, particularly sides, washed ashy-grey with slightly darker shafts ; rest of underside to vent white ; under tail-coverts white with slight sepia to blackish barring ; mantle sooty-sepia with dark shafts and whitish lateral spots ; scapulars and long inner secondaries sooty-sepia with blackish shafts alternate dark and whitish notches along margins and white tips, the long scapulars and secondaries with dark cross bars. Wings : primaries black-brown, second with white shaft ; paler on inner webs, which are slightly freckled ; secondaries slightly paler than primaries white margined and tipped, long ones as previously described ; primary coverts as secondaries ; greater with wider white tips, median and lesser white tipped and with white lateral notches. Under wing-coverts and axillaries white with slight black barring. Back, rump, and basal upper tail-coverts blackish with white tips and marginal spots ; rest of upper tail-coverts white with black shafts ; tail : central pair black and white barred, others with black barring diminishing in extent to outer ones which have black only on the outer webs.

Wings 120-130 mm., females larger. Bill black-brown with greenish base, 25-30 mm. long ; legs and feet olive-green.

Summer : Somewhat like winter, crown feathers with darker centres, white tipped and margined ; nape and hind neck more streaked white ; mantle with darker shaft line and margins notched white ; breast with dark shaft streak and often sub-marginal sepia bar, flanks with sepia irregular barring. Undertail coverts with black shafts ; rest of plumage as winter. The general effect is a more barred and mottled appearance to the upper side and breast.

Sub-adult : Very like winter birds but general tone browner and pale notching to feathers rather buffy ; upper tail-coverts more barred ; breast less greyish more sepia streaked ; wing coverts with buffy tips and lateral notches.

HABITS :

The Wood-Sandpiper arrives in its winter quarters towards the end of September and early October. Most of the early arrivals are sub-adult, followed later by adult birds which have assumed most of the winter plumage, though the change is often gradual and delayed. This bird is one of the common Sandpipers and is found on all the lakes, swamps, rivers, temporary waterpans and on upland streams. It is also met with on the creeks along the coast. Smaller in size than the Green Sandpiper, this bird differs in having a more speckled plumage and a more barred tail. Its general habits are very similar, and there is a marked preference for muddy pools and mud-flats. When flushed, it utters its alarm note, a thrice repeated " giif."

One often meets with these birds in quite small open water amongst papyrus beds, often in company with Painted Snipe. They are also addicted to shallow night-soil pits on the plains beyond Nairobi; here, as already indicated under the section dealing with Snipe, dipterous larvae abound, and doubtless are the attraction.

The food is mostly confined to insects in various forms, small crustacea, mollusca, and some spiders.

The northward movement takes place in the middle of April, but here also one may note the species throughout all the months of the year. Several birds are always to be noted on Lakes Nakuru and Naivasha, but they do not nest.

TRINGA NEBULARIA, Gunn.

GREENSHANK.

Ref. : Gunnerus, Leem. Besk. Finm. Lapp., 1767.

Type locality : Norway.

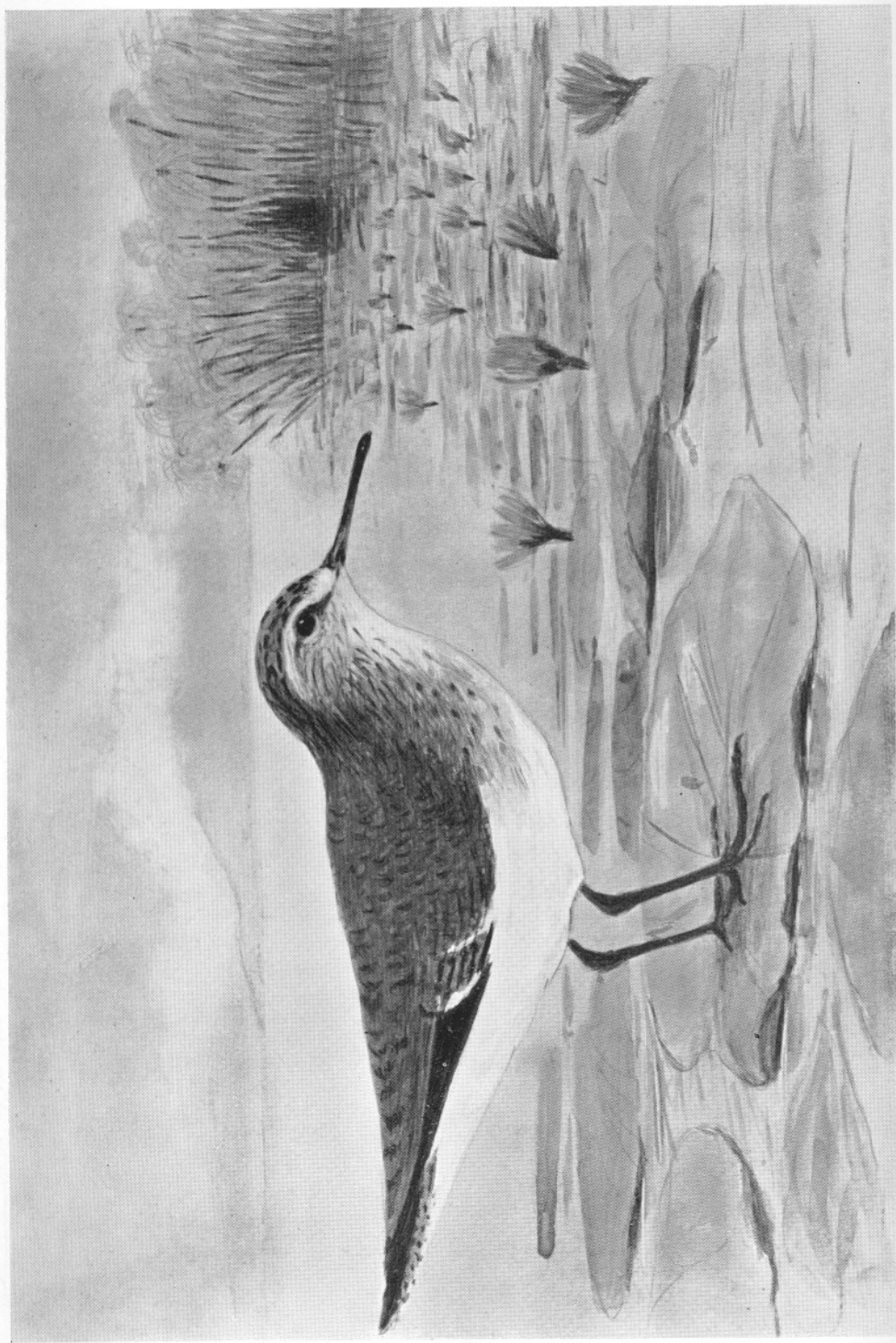
DISTRIBUTION :

Breeds in the northern parts of Europe and Asia and spends the winter in the southern countries, including Africa.

DESCRIPTION : (Plate 23)

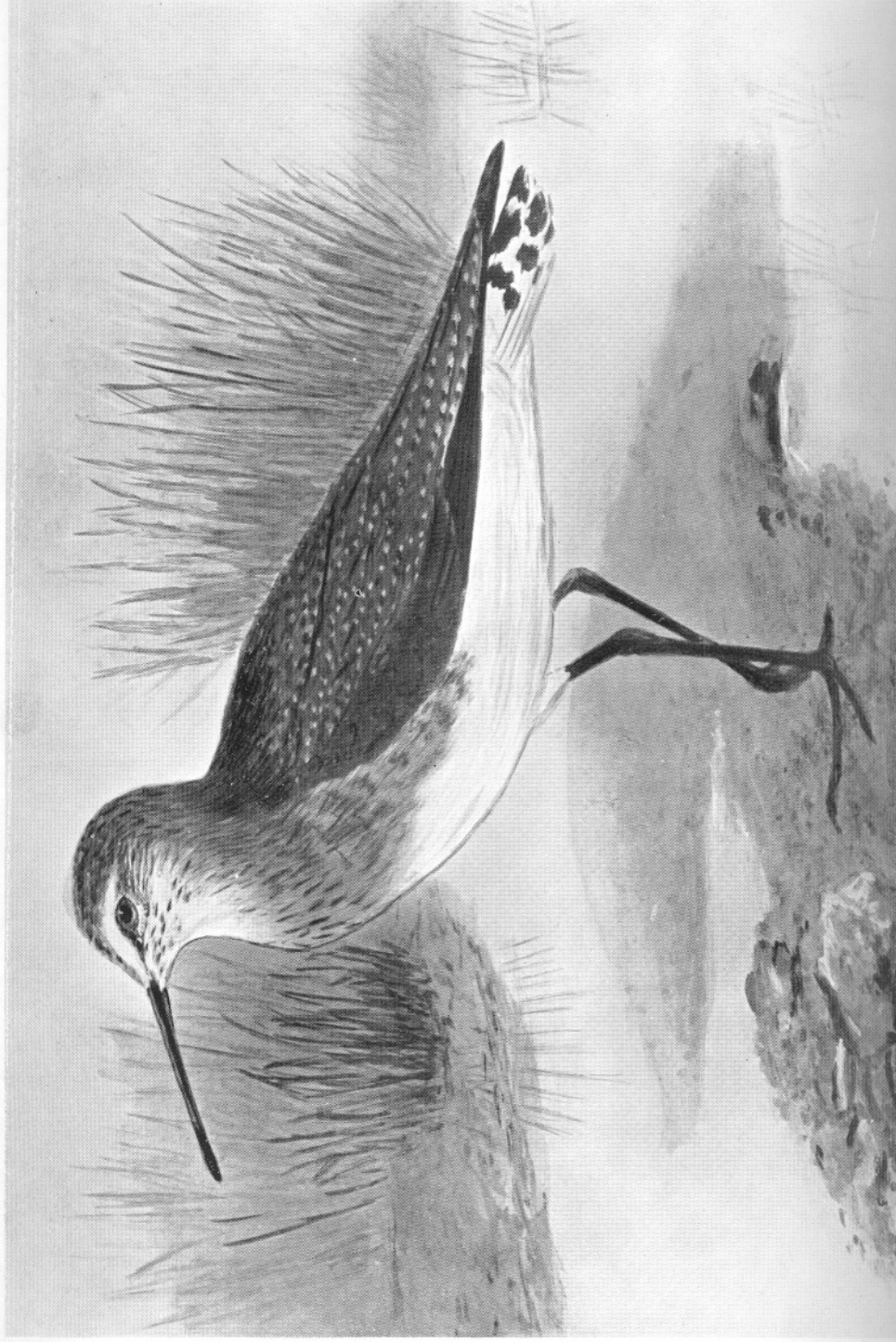
Male and female adult, winter : Forehead mostly white with black and white speckling starting at the root of the bill and widening out over the crown to nape and hind neck; lores white with a narrow speckled streak from nostril to eye; cheeks white; ear-coverts streaked black and white; throat and fore-neck white as also all underside; sides of breast with sepia shaft streak and wavy submarginal lines; mantle, scapulars and long inner secondaries ashy-grey-brown with sepia shaft streak and subterminal dark bar and pale edges, the long scapulars and long secondaries with sepia and whitish notching; back, rump, and upper tail-coverts white, longest ones slightly barred; tail : central pair ashy with sepia bar and irregular wavy submarginal line,

PLATE 19.



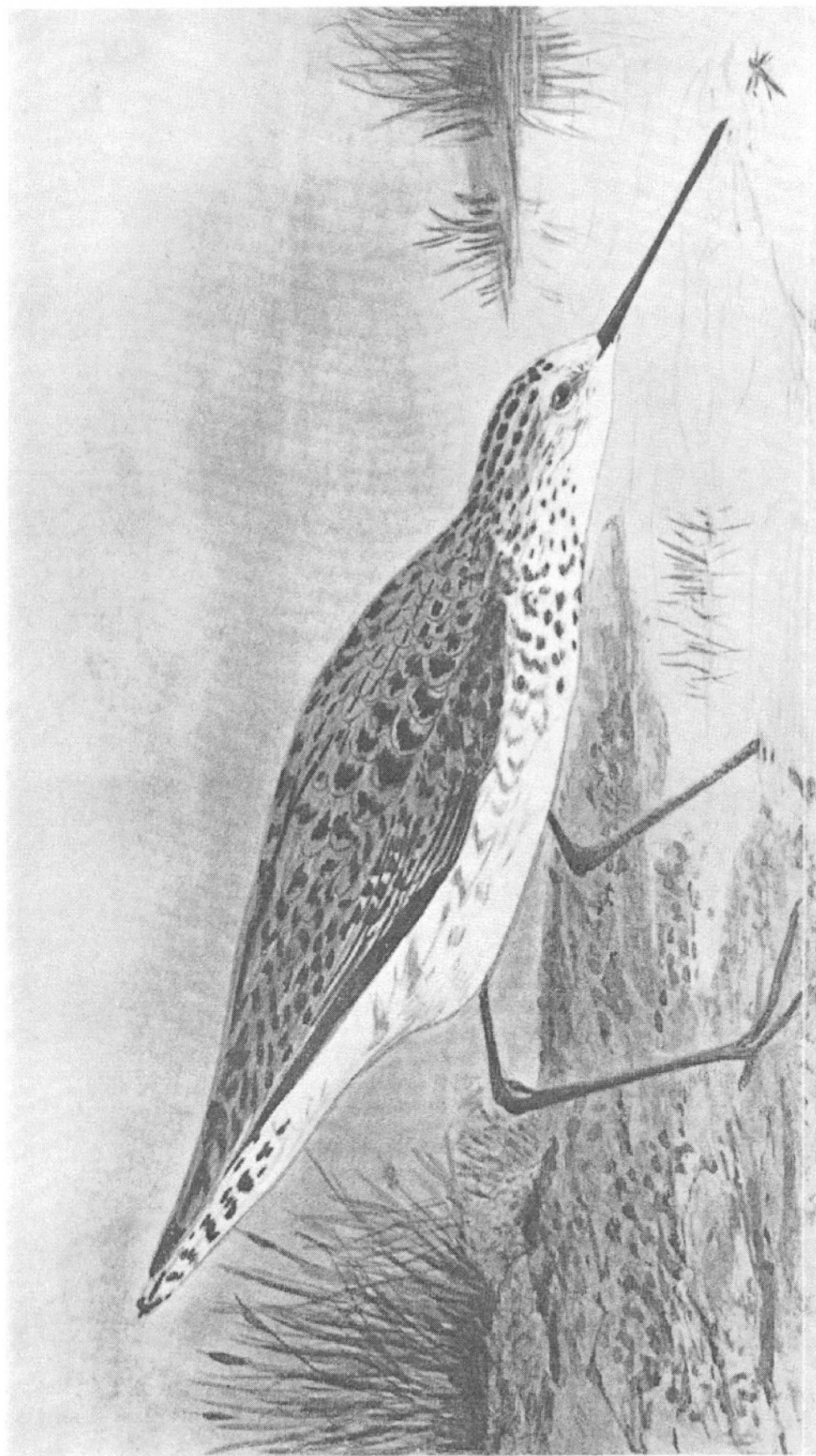
COMMON EUROPEAN SANDPIPER. (*Actitis hypoleucos*, Linn.)

van Someren.



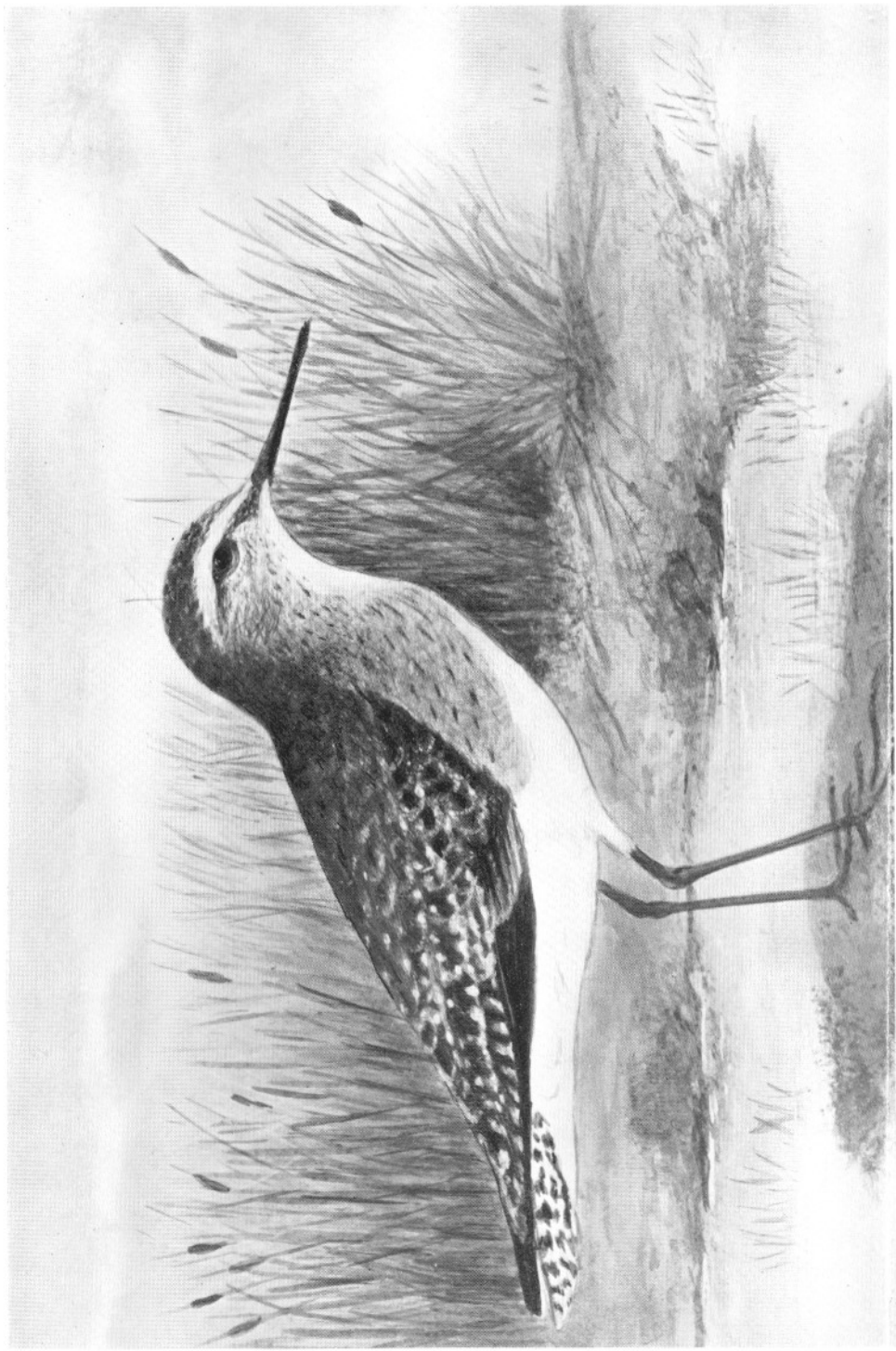
EUROPEAN GREEN SANDPIPER. (*Tringa ochropus*, Linn.)

van Someren.



EUROPEAN MARSH SANDPIPER. (*Tringa stagnatilis*, Bechst.)

van Someren.



EUROPEAN WOOD-SANDPIPER. (*Tringa atarcola*, Linn.)

van Someren.

tip white, remainder white with diminishing amount of sepia barring to outer ones which are marked only on the outer web; each has a subterminal wavy bar and white tip. Wings: primaries black-brown paler on inner web, second primary with white shaft; secondaries more ashy-brown narrowly edged white and white tipped, inner webs mottled; primary coverts ashy-grey-brown; median and greater coverts white edged and tipped, with dark shafts and dark submarginal bar; lesser coverts ashy-grey with whitish tips and edges, and dark shafts. Under wing-coverts white with wavy line, axillaries white or with slight line.

Summer: The change takes place in January and continues up to the time of leaving for the north. Birds are therefore not in full dress before leaving. The difference between this and winter dress is mostly apparent on the upper surface. The top of the head, neck (hinder and side) becomes striped black and white, the sides of the upper breast has wavy sepia to black bars and black spots, the barring extending to the flanks; and the shaft streak is blackish; the mantle, scapulars and long inner secondaries have dark sepia centres, wavy submarginal lines and notched with dark sepia and white edged, the long scapulars and long secondaries have the black notching most marked. The wings as in winter except that the greater and median coverts become like the inner scapulars. Wings: 185-200 mm. Bill, upcurved olive-grey, 50-58 mm. Legs olive-green.

Sub-adult: Like winter but dark markings more brownish sepia; and light marks tinged with buffy, less white. Primaries and secondaries tipped buffy, coverts tipped buffy.

HABITS:

This is the largest of the Sandpipers and cannot be mistaken. The size and upcurved bill is distinctive, as also the white back and rump plainly visible as the bird is flushed. As they rise they utter a loud thrice-repeated "tchew," and circling round will return to the original pool. With the advent of autumn these birds appear in small numbers and scatter over the various waters of Kenya and Uganda, not only on lakes but also rivers and streams and temporary pans and artificial dams. The earliest arrivals have been noted in September, and on the larger lakes their numbers increase up to October. They remain until the spring, leaving toward the end of April or beginning of May. A few birds may be noted during June to August, mostly immature.

Away from large sheets of water, single specimens may be seen on any odd temporary marsh or waterpool, sometimes many miles from the nearest permanent water. The food is taken as the bird walks in the shallows, and consists of insects and their larvae (dipterous, hymenopterous and odonata), small mollusca and crustacea. Here also one finds an association between cattle watering places and feeding

grounds for these birds. Not only is food abundant in such places but the water and its approaches are often laid bare and numerous puddles are formed. The mud flats of Lake Nakuru always prove an attraction and in my experience the greatest numbers are to be found there. Not confined to inland waters, these birds are also to be met with on the coast of Kenya, along the sea front, but mostly on the tidal creeks amongst the mangroves. They are far less wary than the Green Sandpiper and will allow of a reasonable approach.

Genus *LIMOSA*.

LIMOSA LIMOSA LIMOSA, Linn. BLACK-TAILED GODWIT.

Ref. : Linnaeus, Syst. Nat., 1758.

Type locality : Sweden.

DISTRIBUTION :

In summer, breeds in the northern parts of Europe migrating southward for the winter, reaching the eastern side of Africa as far as Natal.

DESCRIPTION : (Not figured)

Male and female, winter : Top of head to nape and upper mantle grey-brown, tipped paler; mantle and scapulars grey-brown with darker shaft streak; lores whitish with an ill-defined supercillium, and a dark loreal streak; cheeks buffy, throat, fore-neck, breast and sides light grey-brown, the last with pale tips; rest of lower surface to vent, white; back and rump dark sepia; upper tail-coverts white, long ones with black bar tipped white. Tail : white with a broad black bar widest at central pair and gradually diminishing to outermost, most with white tips, central pair tipped buffy. Primaries dark sepia, paler on inner webs inclining to white at bases; secondaries similar with white tips and increasing white on outer webs toward inner ones; greater coverts sepia with whitish tips; median coverts more grey-brown with dark shafts and narrow white margins, lesser coverts darker with narrow paler edges.

Summer : No examples in this stage have been recorded from East Africa. The general change is on the upper side which becomes more boldly streaked and the feathers are bordered with pink-buff to cinnamon. The flanks are also washed with buffy-pink.

HABITS :

Very little is known of this bird within the countries dealt with in this paper. Only two records are available to my knowledge, one on the Juba River towards Kismayu and the other at the mouth of the Tana River. It has not been recorded from inland waters. Its dis-

tingtively marked tail, long upcurved bill, and general plumage should render it easily recognisable.

Bill, dark brown at tip, shading to lighter brown and pinkish at base, 90-125 mm.; females longer. Legs and feet dark grey-green: eyes brown. Wings 215-240 mm.; females larger than males.

LIMOSA LAPPONICA, Linn.

BAR-TAIL GODWIT.

Ref. Linnaeus, Syst. Nat., 1758.

Type locality: Lapland.

DISTRIBUTION: (Not figured)

Breeds in Northern Europe and Asia, migrating south in winter; recorded from Seychelles and Somali coast.

NOTE.—This species is included here as it is possible that stray birds may find their way along the coast of Kenya. It has actually been recorded as observed but not secured. The strongly barred tail and general build, very similar to the Black-tailed Godwit, make identification reasonably safe.

Genus *NUMENIUS*

NUMENIUS ARQUATA ARQUATA, Linn. EUROPEAN CURLEW

Ref.: Linnaeus, Syst. Nat., 1758.

Type locality: Sweden.

NUMENIUS ARQUATA LINEATUS, Cuv. EASTERN CURLEW.

Ref.: Cuvier, Regne Anim., 1829.

Type locality: India.

DISTRIBUTION:

Throughout the greater portion of Europe, migrating south and reaching the Cape, during the winter. The Eastern race breeds in the north of Siberia and Asia; south to Africa in winter.

DESCRIPTION: (Plate 24)

Male and female adults, winter. Crown sepia-black and buffy streaked, paler on the forehead; chin and throat white; nape and hind neck as crown but streaking narrower; sides and front of neck, upper breast white with buffy tinge and streaked with sepia. Mantle and scapulars with rather pointed feathers dark sepia-black with grey-brown to buffy margins, the long scapulars and long inner secondaries with dark oblique barring and buffy to white notching mostly on the outer webs. Back and rump white, lower rump streaked sepia and upper tail-coverts white with sepia central streak and sepia barring in-

complete; tail white with sepia barring strongest on outer webs, central pairs shaded buffy-grey between the bars, tips white. Abdomen and flanks white, the latter with sepia shaft streaks; vent and under tail-coverts white with dark shafts, near the ends. **Wings.** primaries black, with distal half of inner web paler, barred or mottled with sepia, inner ones from 7th notched white on the outer webs; secondaries blackish-brown with white marginal notches and white tips; primary coverts black-brown white tipped; greater coverts sepia with wide white notches, almost bars; median and lesser coverts like scapulars and mantle but with more sepia centres; under wing-coverts white with some barring, so also the axillaries. In the Eastern race, the underwing coverts and axillaries are white, the back and rump white, and the streaking on the breast narrower, while the general tone of the upper surface is paler.

Summer : Very like the winter plumage; the outstanding difference is in the margins of the feathers on the upper surface from the crown to the back; the centres are more strongly dark while the edgings and margins are cinnamon-buffy; the underside is also tinged with buffy. Bill, blackish at tip, shading to brown and yellowish at the base of the lower: 100-150 mm., females larger. Wings, 280-320 mm., females run larger than males; eyes brown; legs and feet grey-green.

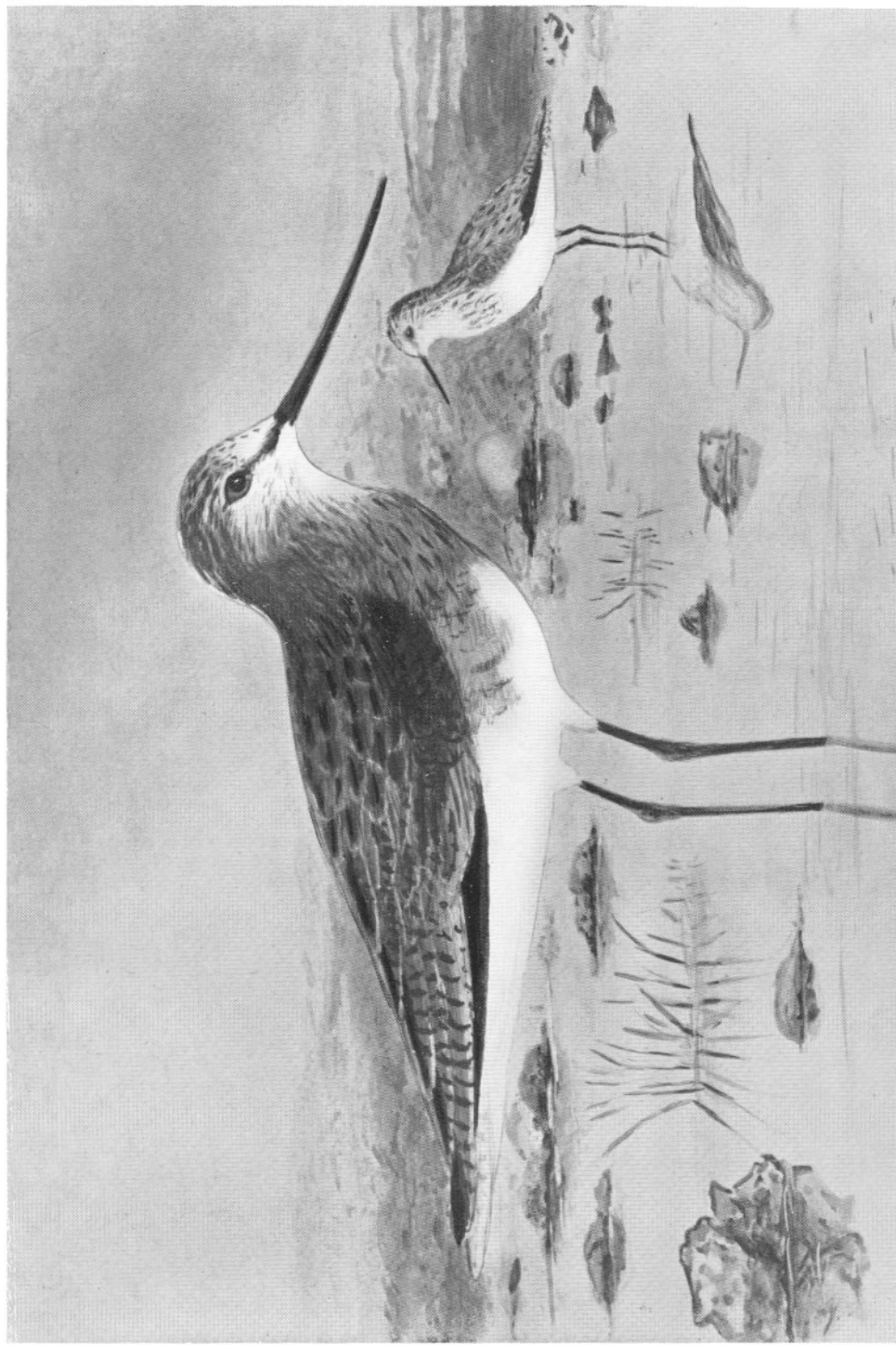
HABITS :

We have already noticed the difference in the plumages between the Western and Eastern races of the Curlew. Both frequent the coastal beaches and creeks of Kenya, and a few are recorded from inland waters such as the larger lakes of both Uganda and Kenya, but particularly Lake Rudolf.

The large size, distinctive build and long downward-curved bill render this bird easily recognisable. The only possible confusion might be with the Whimbrel which is much of the same shape, but considerably smaller.

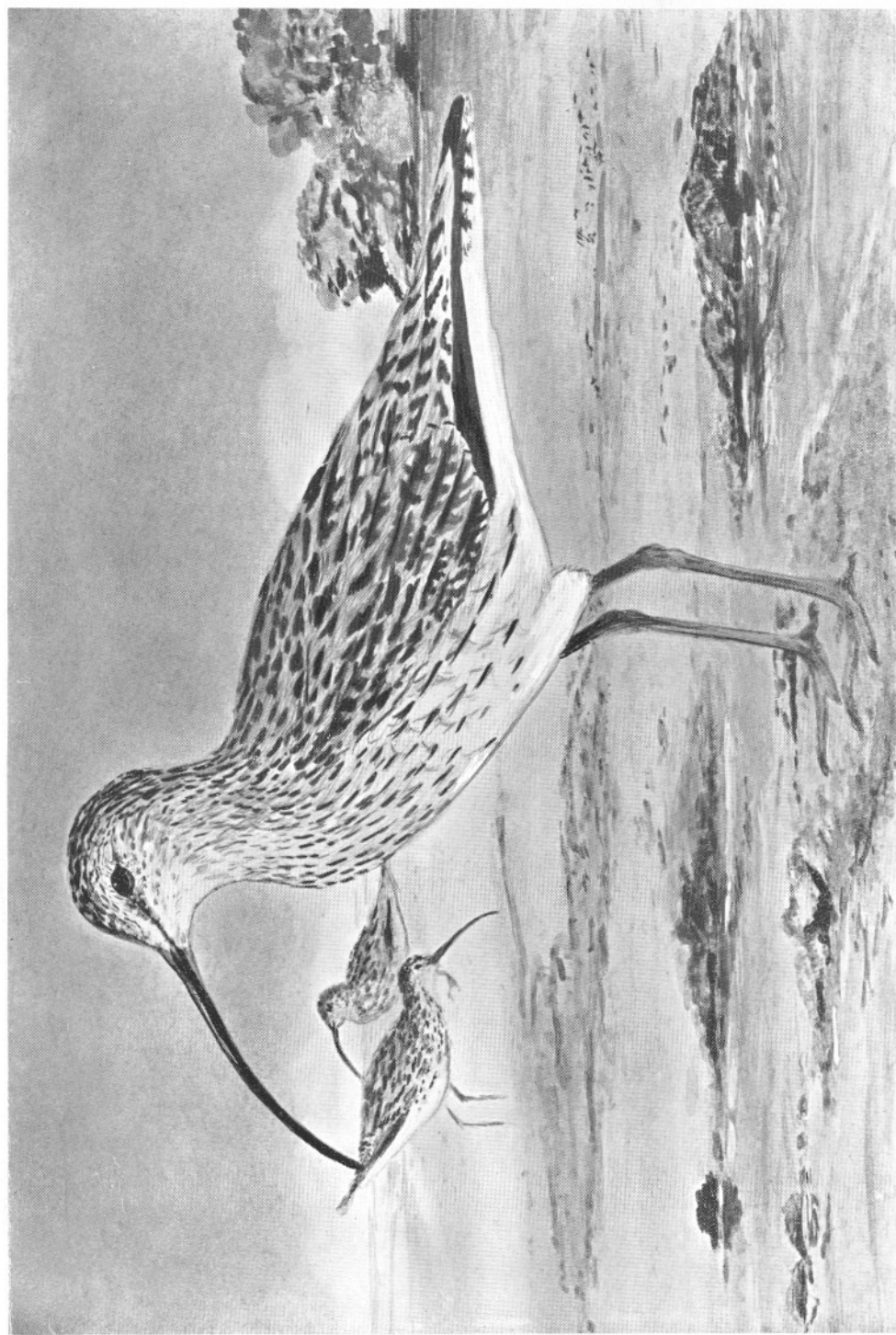
These birds are most in evidence when the tide has receded and laid bare the stretches of reef and banks along the sea-shore; when the tide is high they flight up the creeks seemingly preferring the shelter of these to the open sea front.

They call as they flight along the shore at dusk or even late into the night; the whistling note is similar to that heard at home. When roosting they congregate in flocks on some particular sheltered cove or reach of shore, but at feeding time they disperse in small parties or in ones or twos. They are very wary at such times and just keep out of range, by walking along or taking short flights. Their periods of rest coincide with high water for most of the feeding is done in the shallows along the reefs and in the pools left by the ebbing tide along



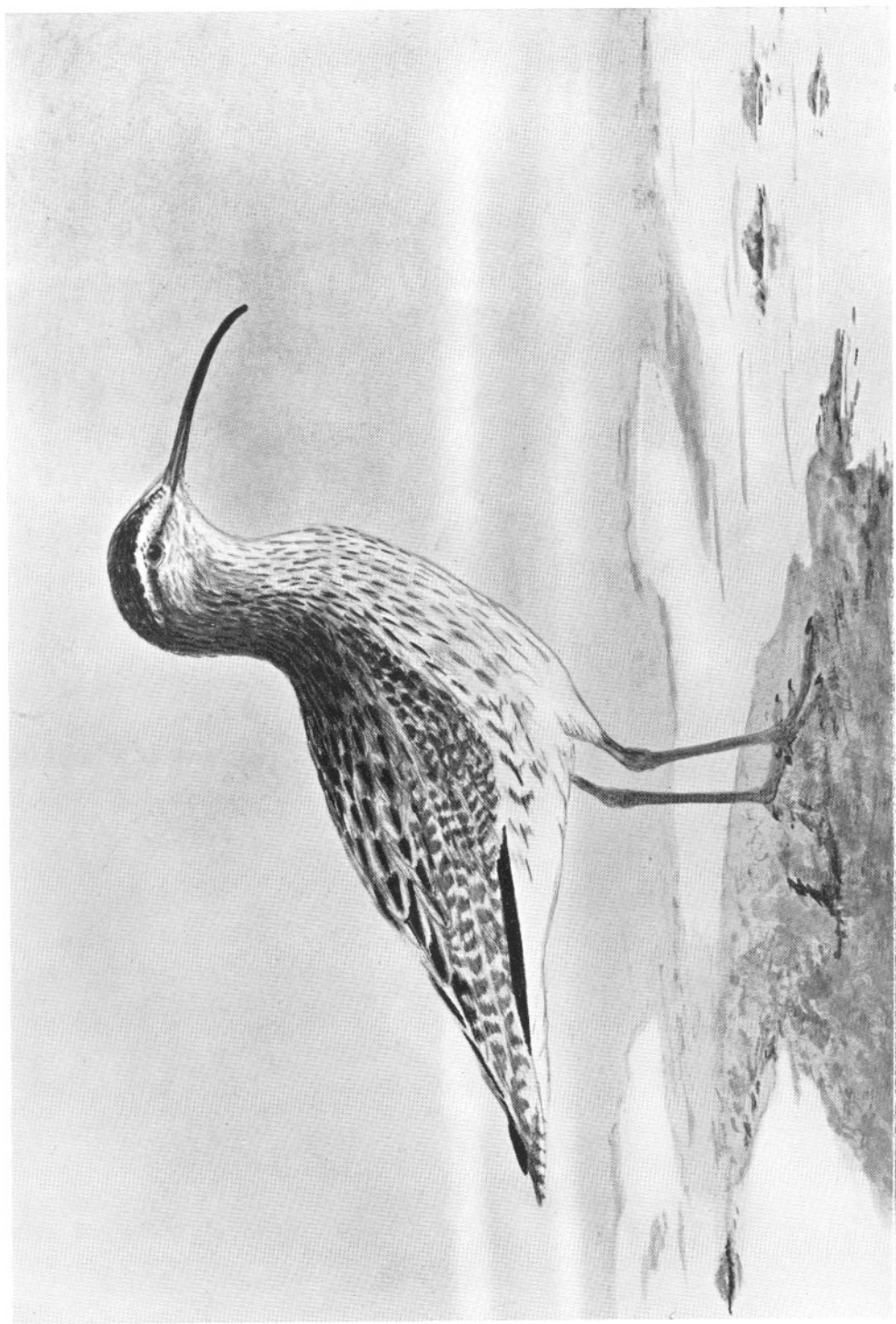
EUROPEAN GREENSHANK. (*Tringa nebularia*, Gunn.)

van Someren



EUROPEAN CURLEW. (*Numenius arquatus*, Linn.)

van Someren.



EUROPEAN WHIMBREL (*Numenius phaeopus* Linn.)

van Someren.

the creeks. The food consists largely of marine worms and slugs, crustacea and mollusca, larvae of various kinds, and certain sea-weeds.

Though many examples are noted throughout the year both along the coast and on inland waters, the species does not breed here.

The Curlews arrive in fair numbers toward the end of October all along the coast, and a few odd birds make their appearance on inland waters, such as Lake Rudolf, in September. They are noted in greatest numbers just before the northward move, toward the end of March, and they are still numerous up to the middle of April, but many non-breeders remain on throughout the summer months.

NUMENIUS PHAEOPUS PHAEOPUS, Linn.

EUROPEAN
WHIMBREL.

Ref. : Linnaeus Syst. Nat., 1758.

Type locality : Sweden.

NUMENIUS PHAEOPUS ALBOAXILLARIS, Lowe.

EAST AFRICAN WHIMBREL.

Ref. : Lowe, B.B.O.C., 1921.

Type locality : Inhambane, P.E.A.

DISTRIBUTION :

The European Whimbrel breeds in Iceland east to Northern Siberia, and migrates southward for the winter, reaching Eastern Africa to as far as the Cape.

DESCRIPTION : (Plate 25)

Like a small edition of the Curlew, but darker. Top of head from base of bill to nape sepia, with a central buffy streak irregularly marked; a superciliary streak from the nostrils to the nape; lores sepia, eyelids white, ear-coverts streaked white to buffy and sepia; cheeks buffy mottled with sepia; neck whitish to buffy narrowly streaked light sepia; chest and flanks whitish with larger light sepia streaks centrally, expanding centrally and ending in a point on the shaft, those of the flanks running into bars; rest of underside white, with some sepia spots on the under tail-coverts; throat white; mantle sepia, with slight buffy notches along edges; scapulars similar but marginal notches more pronounced, those of the long scapulars more buffy; long inner secondaries sepia with ashy-grey incomplete banding and white to buffy marginal notches; primaries sepia to blackish, with inner webs paler basally and with white notching to bars; inner primaries with white notching on the outer webs; secondaries sepia with white tips, white notches to almost bars on both webs; primary coverts sepia with white tips; other coverts sepia with broad buffy to white notches and pale tips and margins, lesser coverts at bend rather darker and with less buffy to

white at margins. Axillaries white barred with sepia mostly on outer webs.

Wings 235-260 mm.; females larger than males. Bill 75-98 mm.; horn brown, darker at tip and yellowish at base of lower; eyes brown; legs and feet olive-grey.

The African race *ALBOAXILLARIS* differs from the nomotypical form in having the under wing-coverts and axillaries pure white. This appears to be a somewhat doubtful character and not very constant, many African specimens showing a variation from pure white to strong barring. It is said to breed on Mauritius but this requires confirmation.

HABITS :

The Whimbrel is like a small edition of the Curlew and in its general behaviour resembles that species. One can distinguish it in the field by its smaller size, darker back and head, the latter with a pale stripe down the centre.

Whereas the Curlew is more a bird of the coast line, the Whimbrel is more often recorded on inland waters. Thus on Lakes Nakuru, Naivasha, and Rudolf many specimens are noted; it has also been recorded on the lakes of Western Uganda and Lake Kioga.

The African race, however, is said to be limited to the coastal strip, but as already indicated, the status of this bird is not satisfactory.

The earliest record for any inland water is August 28th, but the bulk arrive in September, not in flocks, but driblets, doubtless spending much of their time along the Nile. They were noted in considerable numbers on the Sudan Nile in November and October.

They frequent the mud bank and areas of clear shore, feeding at and just below water level, and resting on the flats.

The food consists of aquatic insects and their larvae, small mollusca and crustacea, and seeds of water-weeds.

The Whimbrel is much less wary than the Curlew, and one is able to approach to within sufficient distance to obtain the bird with a small bore gun, or to make accurate observations without the aid of glasses.

I am not aware that eggs of the African race have been taken or described.